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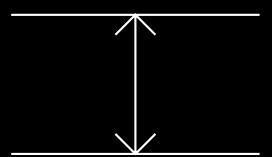
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MAX ANSTIE HAS MOVED INTO THE REALM  
OF MX2 WORLD TITLE CONTENDER  
© NUNO LARANJEIRA

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THE ROMANIACS BROUGHT ITS MANIC MIX OF  
MOTORCYCLES AND MAYHEM TO SIBIU ONCE MORE  
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# COMMENT

It was no big shock to hear that the French – the nation that aced the MXoN in Kegums last September – had taken the overall win at the Junior World Championship thanks to the exploits of Maxime Renaux who took a double win in the 125 class and Brian Moreau who took an 85cc moto victory. With a nation's best three scores counting towards the overall classification that was all the Frenchies needed to seal the deal. And fair play to them...

I have a real admiration for the French federation – the FFM – who seem to constantly reinvest in the sport to ensure that all their members from Pierre Wobbeur right through to Jacques Internationale get the best of the best. That might come in the form of reasonably priced practice facilities courtesy of their local club or the expert guidance of a medical professional or former champion at a Grand Prix. The support the French riders get is immense when compared to what many other countries' federations – including our own – seem to offer.

From what I can gather this is partially down to there only being two licensing bodies – the FFM and the MON. The FFM is the equivalent of the ACU while the MON is the organisation for amateurs pretty much like the AMCA is over here. I don't know too much about how the MON works but it's very clear that the FFM has a very strong structure from club and regional level right through to the very top.

This structure – that all members pay into at each stage of the process through licence fees, club memberships, race entries and so on – helps manage and nurture talent and with a clear grading system in place for riders of all ages, as well as a natural and obvious path of progression, it helps the cream of the crop rise to the top. That talent is then managed appropriately with that self generated federation funding and is quite possibly why France is such a hotbed of motocross talent right now.

It used to be the case that the ACU were the MX kingpins in the UK and there was a very solid structure of centres and clubs. Over the years this domination faded as frustration set in and other licensing bodies were formed. While these have scratched an itch to some degree it's also muddled things up and it's almost like there's no clear direction in our sport any more.

Sure, the ACU British Motocross Championship – aka the Maxxis – is still the one to win but how does an up and coming rider get there if he or she can't get an Expert licence because there are little to no 'Open to Centre' events where grading points can be won.

Also, with monies at club level being paid into various pots there's less for the ACU – because let's face it that's who we all look to when it comes to these things – to spend on nurturing our future stars and ensuring our current crop of world beaters are well supported when they get to European or World championship level.

While I applaud the steps that MX Nationals promoter Paul Irwin has taken to help create a fair feeder system for the British championship (including granting Expert status based on lap times rather than a rider's ability to sniff out existing grading opportunities) I fear that unless all the recognised licensing bodies start working together then as a motocross nation we might find ourselves sucking Johnny Foreigner's dust much more frequently. And that's not what being British is all about...

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*Sully*

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French ace Maxime Renaux takes the 125 class by storm at the Junior Worlds

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# TONY

# CAIROLI



## ENOUGH'S ENOUGH FOR THE CHAMP WHO AFTER BATTLING ARM INJURY FINALLY PUTS HIS SEASON ON HOLD...

**A**fter battling against bad luck and injuries I've finally had to admit defeat and made the difficult decision to sit it out for a few weeks. This means I will miss the next two races – Loket and Lommel. It is the first time that I've ever had to stop during an MX1 season because normally I will never give up even if I'm having serious troubles – it's just the way I am!

'Disce Pati', is tattooed on my left arm which is Latin for 'learn from the pain'. The only other time that I've had to retire before the end of the season was in 2008 during the South African MX2 Grand Prix. This was my worst injury ever – my knee and lower leg was only attached by skin and the recovery of this injury took a long, long time.

Since that year I've never been injured badly during the season, occasionally at the Motocross of Nations or during the winter training but never during a championship.

I was forced to make this decision after the Grand Prix of Latvia. It was a big blow for me because in Kegums – which is one of my favorite tracks of the year – I had been able to ride through the pain in my left arm quite well finishing with two fourth places and good points.

Unfortunately when I returned to Belgium for the usual medical checks, Doctor Claes (the doctor who is treating my injuries) told me that the bone wasn't healing and I had to stop riding for a few weeks. It was really disappointing because after the disaster of the qualifying heat in Maggiora I was making good progress in every race. After being 13th in Italy, I was ninth in Germany, seventh in Sweden and fifth in Latvia. I was managing to deal with the pain

and trying to keep as close to the red plate as possible.

Even though I was managing it, the battle with the pain was even tougher than the battle with my rivals on track. In Latvia I was close to giving up on Saturday when it was almost impossible for me to focus on the track and lines in order to score a decent time in the timed practice. I was last! I think that's the first time that this has happened to me, but it was a good lesson for me and even from the last gate, I was able to get a good start and almost grab the holeshot!

I want to take things back to the last time that we spoke, it was just after Teutschenthal and we were going to beautiful Sweden for one of the more classic Grands Prix of the year – Uddevalla. Uddevalla has always been a fantastic place to race, even if a few years ago I did lose 50 points and the red plate to Clement Desalle in one day!

I can remember it as if it was yesterday, it was a cloudy, cold and rainy weekend and I was feeling comfortable on the slippery track, winning the qualifying heat on Saturday afternoon. We all settled down ready to have a good and solid weekend safe in the knowledge that we had a 50 point lead on Clement.

But as we all know motocross isn't like the other sports, in motocross we say that anything can happen and so it was! In the first moto I was running in fifth, when a stone just jammed solid in my sprocket, stopping my rear wheel. I just couldn't get restarted and I had to end my race with zero points.

In the second moto, after a few laps, I landed in a mud hole at the side of the track and my bike became a prisoner of the track! I don't

know how many times I tried to wrestle my bike back from the mud but it was impossible and resulted in another DNF!

Just to give you an idea of how bad it was, two mechanics spent almost half an hour with shovels to dig the bike out and take it to the washing place. I remember that in the beginning I was just furious and I couldn't accept what had happened but by the night while drinking a beer with some friends down town in Uddevalla I said to them 'okay, from the next race, I will win all the heats, till the end of the championship!'. Of course that would be almost impossible to do and I was only talking like this because of the rage I had inside me but losing can sometimes motivate you to do much better than before.

Okay, so now you would like to know how I did in the last seven races of the 2012 season, right? As I told you, winning all the motos was almost impossible but still I won 13 of the 14 remaining heats making probably the best season of my career!

Ci vediamo presto in pista...spero (see you on the track soon...I hope!)

A stylized, handwritten signature of Tony Cairoli in red ink.





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# BRYAN

# MACKENZIE



## IRN BRY SUFFERS WHAT COMIC BOOK GUY WOULD CALL THE “WORST WEEKEND EVER!”

It's been a pretty emotional two months and things have got real tough real fast. What started as my best season out of the blocks in my entire career, battling over third in the Maxxis and comfortably leading the British Masters, has flipped upside down.

In short, the team lost its funding and it's just made things really hard. I still ride for Pendrich Height Services Kawasaki as we have too many great sponsors I feel responsible for and committed to to just roll over and let this sh\*tstorm swallow me up. But the long and short of it is there is no financial support anymore so I'm without a salary or resources to buy parts for the remainder of the season and trying to suck everything up myself.

The show must go on, regardless of the hurdles that try and trip you. The Maxxis at Foxhill for instance – you wouldn't believe the grief that weekend brought! Me and the moto gods were in the ring that weekend and they were pounding me with body shots but I was too stupid/determined to take a knee and throw the towel in. The result wasn't ideal and the 48 hours prior were a real test of resilience.

We were all prepped and loaded when our plans were changed late on Friday night and the race truck was no longer going. Unfortunately, I can't fit everything I need to take for a competitive day at the Maxxis in the back of my camper so we needed to find a big panel van pronto. Success, my Uncle Bill was on holiday and he said we could use his van so my bro Deano and his beautiful assistant Ed started loading the van late Friday night for an early getaway to cover the 400 miles to Foxhill.

I'm not done yet, it couldn't have just been that easy. After packing all of our sh\*t in, Dingo was driving the van the 15 or so miles back home when lo and behold the ass fell out of the van motor and it ground to a halt only a few miles from the house. Well, that was depressing. Fixing a blown 250F motor is one thing but a Citroen Relay is another!

At that point I seriously contemplated giving in and chalking this one up to a bad job because the £££s

were diminishing at every play and it was starting to get scary. As we worked our way down the list of potential battle plans, one of which was taking my camper with some stuff and loading my little caddy van with other stuff, we finally settled on trying to hire a big panel van on Saturday morning. Deano and Ed organised themselves and arranged to pick up a new transit in Edinburgh at noon and secured sponsorship – Willy Hill the bookie – for the hire fee on the way for only a small £30 investment.

I organised to take the camper too so it gave us somewhere to sleep for the weekend and we were finally loaded for the third time in as many vehicles for the weekend and set off, albeit a little deflated. But it's a track I like so it didn't take too much effort to pick my mood back up once I finally had the two vans between the white lines on the black stuff pointed south. But it was a testing drive, too...

A truck fire on the M6 closed the motorway and I had to take a detour off the beaten track – at one point I was only a handful of miles from Hawkstone Park – and what should have been a six-hour journey took 10! Man, I needed to cut some slack. But I was happy once Sunday morning came and was back on the job under a Thor pop-up like old times with a set of 2016 Thor kit on my back and Rad Ad (the Thor guy) amped up and keeping spirits high.

The first race was okay and I ran a strong moto only to crash on the last lap while trying to position myself close enough to Ben Watson to make a pass so I lost a spot to finish sixth. The second moto started way better and I was out of the first turn up front but I knew straight away something was up with my bike. It sounded terrible underneath me and it was making me nervous.

I was battling Clarke for the lead so tried to block it out but it was holding my attention far too much and making me alter my riding style to try and adapt and eventually I crashed. I remounted and tried to keep going but it was getting way too dangerous. Honestly, I couldn't afford – financially or physically – for it to nip up and grenade the motor and maybe send me to the

deck from a height. So I pulled out of the moto while the wheels were still at least turning. That was it, I was broken. I officially couldn't be bothered anymore.

The bike potentially needed a big chunk of change invested into it again and I just didn't know where that was going to come from. I'd used up so many motivation points in the last couple of weeks trying to pay for motocross and survive at home with no income that my will was shot and I was ready to pack up and go home.

BC and my good lady talked me into staying for the last race and I knew I had to because I don't just race for myself but for everyone who supports me but when I sat down I just couldn't envisage myself on the line – my mind was just elsewhere.

Deano, Ed and Rad Ad fitted my spare race bike engine into the chassis that I was racing with to keep it as familiar as possible and I went out and rode to a fifth place for them which was a small win for the mindset I was in. In fact, I actually rode pretty good all day. I wasn't far away with my speed at any point but the cards just never fell my way all weekend and I slipped back to fifth in the championship courtesy of my DNF which is disappointing.

But it's a new month with new opportunities to redeem last month and if nothing else it builds character – it's just unfortunate the bank doesn't take direct debits of 'character' for the mortgage because if they did me and the guys around me would be ballin'.





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# JONTY

# EDMUNDS



## HOW THE DAKAR RALLY'S FUTURE IS LOOKING STRONGER THAN EVER...

**D**akar, so it seems, is the new Enduro World Championship. By that I mean it's the event half the EWC paddock's big-hitters seemingly can't get entered into quick enough. Not all that long after the very same riders couldn't get into, and away from motocross, quick enough...

Maybe it's a French thing but both Pela Renet and Antoine Meo are set to compete in the 2016 Dakar rally. So too is Spaniard Ivan Cervantes. And with Marc Coma recently announcing his retirement from Dakar competition the rally landscape is suddenly a whole lot less predictable than it was only a few months ago.

Renet will soon be done with enduro – much to the sport's loss – opting to focus full-time on a career in rally. Meo openly wanted the same, but will compete in the EWC for one more year at KTM's request. For both rally, all being well, is their future.

Meo openly admits that he'll 'be a nobody' when he starts his first rally event later this year. Renet will be in a very similar boat. Anything but nobodies, both will be starting out in rally coming from the very top of the EWC, backed with official, factory machinery.

When Marc Coma started his Dakar participation – he had no guarantees it would become a career – it was a very different story. As it was for Cyril Despres. Coma, like Despres, was a very good enduro rider but he wasn't a celebrated world champion. Marc's first Dakar, again like Cyril's, was on anything but official machinery.

Both Cyril and Marc experienced what many

consider to be the real Dakar – African Dakar. Both entered under the radar. Both learned what it was like to sleep in the dirt before getting into factory teams in junior positions, able to learn from experienced, elder riders.

Dakar's importance – its global reach – has increased year-on-year during the last decade. Switching continents has opened up new opportunities, touching the lives and hearts of many, many millions.

With Despres and now Coma gone from the bike class there is no obvious successor. KTM will field a team that mixes both experience and youth. Jordi Viladoms, who only a few years back was snapped up by KTM from Gas Gas to be Coma's support rider, now has the chance to shine. Although not officially announced Viladoms starts as the new KTM team leader.

Alongside the experienced Spaniard will be Australia's Toby Price – stand out performer of the 2015 Dakar, which was his rookie year. And Sam Sunderland. Both young, fast but relatively inexperienced, both will be looking to impress. KTM will field a second team consisting of Antoine Meo, Pablo Quintanilla and Laia Sanz.

Husqvarna will field a two-rider team. Lead by experienced Portuguese rider Ruben Faria, it will also enter Renet. Like Viladoms at KTM, Faria now has the chance to shine. Water carrier to Despres for many years, what he possibly lacks in outright speed he more than makes up for with experience and knowledge.

Then of course there's Honda. The fast but crash prone Juan Barreda lead's their effort but it's their #2 Paolo Gonçalves who many, but possibly not Honda, see as their best

asset. Like Viladoms and Faria, the Portuguese rider has experience and a sound head on his shoulders. As does countryman, and back-at-Yamaha rider Helder Rodrigues.

The 2016 Dakar will be Coma's first as ASO's new sporting director. How much influence he will have over the race route I'm not sure. But, as a rider that started his rally career in Africa, and who has experienced one hell of a lot during each of the 12 Dakars he's raced in – the big question is will he steer the event in any given direction. More importantly will he place ever-greater emphasis on navigation?

How great Marc's influence on Dakar is – if any at all – will be seen in the coming years. How well the event's newcomers do and who succeeds him we'll know at the end of next January.

The only thing that's really clear is that Dakar ain't what it once was. It's been a South American event for several years now but champions like Despres and Coma ensured a very real connection to its African roots. That connection to the past has now gone.

In many ways it's only now that Dakar's new chapter truly begins...





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# DANIEL

# GROVE



## WE FIND THE IDENTITY OF DAN'S #1 MAXXIS MAN(CRUSH)...

Photo by **Scorch Images**

I usually find ideas for my column while I'm out running or cycling as there are normally no distractions – except for moving cars and wild animals (I nearly ran in to a deer a couple of months ago). There's no phone – that's busy recording what I'm doing on Strava – or no computer or TV screen, nothing. Just me and the road...

Anyway, Inspiration this time came while driving home from the Foxhill round of the Maxxis a few weeks ago. I was talking to my much better half when we left the track after the last race – that I thought Gert Krestinov was gonna win and that would have been almost as shocking as his GP win at Lommel in 2008 – about the guy we spoke to last before heading home.

I was telling her about everything I knew about him and tried to draw up some comparisons between me and this guy and there are actually quite a few things that we share. We both have a gammy shoulder, we broke both our wrists within the same year, we're almost the same age and we're both follicly challenged. We've both never won a British championship either...

Now most racers to my girlfriend all look pretty much the same, they all have bikes and gear and a helmet so she is right to a point however when you know a bit about them and their character it makes them much more relatable when you're talking about them.

So I was explaining to her what I knew about this chap and thought that as he does a bit of work in this magazine it would be weird if he was interviewed for it, so I've typed up most of what I know about him.

If you flick back a couple of pages you'll see the guy in question, my column street neighbour Bryan MacKenzie. He first popped up on my radar at a British Masters round at Foxhill 10 years ago and the track conditions were the same for this year's Maxxis round – baked.

Back then he was on a 250 two-stroke Kawasaki in MX1 and he rode the wheels of it – not literally – in some badass black and

orange Shift gear. Being a die hard two-stroke campaigner myself that's what made me start following his results I guess. I'm not 100 per cent sure how I started to get to actually know him, I know I spoke to him first in 2008 and it was at Little Silver where a British Four-Stroke/Under 21 round was taking place.

After then I pretty much saw him in passing at races that I went to watch and exchanged a nod, or a reverse nod where you pretend to be surprised to see someone and you tilt your head backwards while opening your mouth and raising your eyebrows. High fives were never exchanged as we aren't American.

I recall speaking to him in 2011 and now a trend is emerging as our last two encounters over the last two years he was stripped off after a moto, just like he was a few weeks back at Foxhill with just his padded race shorts on. Now the last thing he, or anyone else with a seven hour drive home would want to do is talk to some farmer-accented fan boy but as always he made the time for a quick chat before grabbing himself a shower.

That would have happened anyway regardless of me being a contributor for this magazine as he's made the time before at the end of a long day of racing to have a little chat. As always I wished him a safe trip home and he returned the gesture with 'and you, all 10 minutes of it, ha!'

Back in 2010 he had a deal to ride Huskies in MX2 after a few punts at racing a 450 and ruining himself a few times. Huskies back then wouldn't rip the grass off a putting green as chances are the bike wouldn't start up back then and in one moto at the first round he was left on the line as the gate dropped. He then got himself a couple of 250F Kawasaki's and promptly qualified first at the Lyng round of the British Championship working out the back of a VW Transporter with an EZ-Up which just goes to show that you only need the basics to do well at the pinnacle of British motocross. Big campers and eight bikes don't get riders on the podium.

In a bizarre twist in his racing career he raced KTM's for a year in 2012 and at the last round rumour had it that he had been leant some factory motors as Elliott Banks-Browne who was also on a KTM, was in the closest British title fight in years with Mel Pocock on a Yamaha. Those rumours didn't go away after Bryan yanked the holeshot in both MX2 motos and led each race for three quarters of the way before finally getting a pair of moto wins and missing the top step of the podium by one point a year later at Farleigh Castle. That's just down the road from me but I missed it as I was on spanning duty at the AMCA Championship which was unfortunate. However, I bet he was on the road home sooner without me there...

I'm almost certain that since his final days racing a two-stroke 10 years ago he's been running Thor gear/helmets and Gaerne boots – although he has flirted with a few goggle companies over the years – and been on Kawasakis apart from that brief holiday racing KTM's as well as a stint on 450 Hondas in 2009.

He's had the same mechanic for as long as I remember too. I don't know anyone currently racing at pro level with that kind of loyalty, maybe Andrew Short in the states, so he must look after these brands just as much as they look after him.

I saw him at the International Dirt Bike Show a couple of years ago giving away glass plaques of his bikes front number plate to each of his sponsors as a thank you gesture. Pure class and he had load of them to give out.

A lot of guys in his race could learn a lot from Bry Mac, or they could just carry on riding smooth practice tracks when the suns out to practice their whips for Instagram...

*Daniel Grove*



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# JAKE

# NICHOLLS

## JAKE PICKS UP THE PACE AS HIS COMEBACK GATHERS MOMENTUM...

It's back to normality – finally, sort of – if there is any normality for what we do and after I last wrote I took part in my first GP in over 12 months. I've always quite liked the track in Sweden although they've changed the layout and it's nowhere near as good now to be honest. But it's still pretty challenging due to the nature of the ground there – it's like gravel on top of blue groove.

The weekend started off steady, to be expected really. The qualifying race was a little better – I'm a racer so the first 10 minutes or so were good and I was pushing through the pack after a bad start and got to about 16th or 17th but then one of the worst things that can happen mid-battle happened – I started thinking.

That may sound weird to some of you but it's pretty simple. To go that speed you're pretty much going against 90 per cent of all your natural instincts and I slowed down into the comfort zone which meant dropping back to 20th.

The first race on Sunday was much the same to be honest but the second race was better, I pushed all moto and managed to limit the thinking and my fitness was actually really good – my best lap was with three laps to go and I ended 15th which I was pleased with.

The thinking I'm referring to is quite common when coming back from injuries, let alone 12 months off the race track and three big injuries, so it's gonna take time to shift but that's part of it and that's what I'm using the remainder of this season for.

I had a bit of a mission the following weekend in Latvia after I had an awkward fall in the timed

qualifying session and hurt my back. I landed right where I broke it in February last year. I tried to ride the qualifying race but I couldn't hold my leg out around the corners as I've damaged the muscles connecting my legs to my back and pelvis. The next day was much worse. I tried to ride in warm-up but was in agony. I hurt my kidneys and it also really affected my bowels for a couple weeks – it actually stopped me farting which I was quite upset about...

So I didn't ride for 11 days but managed to get a couple of days in leading up to the Czech GP which went okay. I struggled with bike set-up all weekend to be honest which is another tough part of coming back from injury mid-season. Each time I get on the bike I'm getting a bit quicker so my set-up needs to constantly evolve. Also the Czech track is one of a kind really – so slick and choppy – and I think it was maybe one track where racing the 350 was a little bit tough in places with it not quite having as much grunt as the 450s although there were some places where it was better.

We made a big change with tyres between the first and second races on Sunday and I was a different bloke in moto two. I had confidence in the bike again and could push on a bit. I finally found some pace and was going forwards but I dropped it with about five laps to go which was frustrating as I was battling for a top 14 spot. But I finished on a happier note as I was hitting my head against the wall after moto one.

We drove back to Holland that night and have been there ever since. I had a good day riding Tuesday, then tried to ride again Wednesday but my back was too painful again which is

annoying but it's important I rest it ahead of Lommel this weekend.

I haven't got any news of what I will be doing next year yet but I hope to get a chance to prove myself in the MXGP class as I feel I haven't done that yet and I've got a lot more to show. I've had a rough 18 months after doing my back pre-season, then a couple of months later damaging my hands and missing most of the season followed by the dramas of this season.

It's tough mentally as I've said before but also when people write you off after a bad run and forget that two and three years ago I was fourth and seventh in the world championship and fighting for podiums most weekends. It's not until the good people around me remind me that I think about those good times and how I'm a better rider from then but just not able to get the rhythm from race to race.

I'm trying to keep things fun but still put everything into it like I always have. Most importantly, I love racing my bike more than ever so roll on the rest of the season.

Cheers #45





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## EXTRA! EXTRA!

### READ ALL ABOUT IT...

If Steven Spielberg was to make a movie called MXGP: 2015 and script it on this year's drama-filled World Motocross Championship series it would likely go straight to DVD quicker than *Chuckie 5* because the story line is 'too far fetched'. It's been one thing after the other this season as the twists in the story line have been relentless...

It was a sad end to the season for reigning MXGP and people's champion Tony Cairoli as he finally succumbed to the arm injuries he sustained in Maggiora. It was a bloody valiant effort though – you have to give him that – as he fought through round after round just trying to keep the chances of another title alight.

I can assure you, riding with painkilling injections just to get through a moto ain't fun and I can't imagine the mental toll it must have taken going week after week knowing what was heading his way at the weekend. This obviously rules him out of the title chase and means he will not be a world champion for the first time since 2008. It's sad but we'll all win in the end when he makes a run at next year's title with turbo-charged motivation.

Jeffrey Herlings – what has he done in a past life? Whatever it was he's getting punished for it now with the latest in a line of injuries that has culminated in a dislocated hip. Obviously frustrated and emotional, JH84 posted this on social media – punctuation and spelling all his own – which pretty much says it all...

'How much bad luck can a person have?? Im out for the season. And guess what? I am HAPPY this season is over!!!! F\*\*K 2015!!!! Now I am gonna heal up. The next couple of months I dont wanna have ANYTHING to do with Motocross anymore. But, I will come back next year. And guess what.. I'll f\*\*king beat the

s\*\*t out of everybody. So for the 2nd year in a row I lost the championship due injuries. Thank you Pit Beirer for believing in me. I didnt deliver a championship, But I will in the future. Thanks to the rest of the team, and all my sponsors and partners. Sorry, I fought as long as I could. But I think I had the devil with me the last 369 days !! Seems God hates me. Thanks to my parents and brother and Ruubs and everybody close to me for sticking behind me. Big thanks to my girl @brittvoorn she always stayed behind me. I love you so much babe. Sorry for letting everyone down. I just got no words for this..."

With Herlings now officially dunzo for the season it looked set that Tim Gajser was going to be the man to relieve the #84 KTM of its red plate but young Timmy seems to be doing a good job of not taking it. After Latvia the Honda rider had a 25-point lead on his nearest rival but after Loket his 10th place finish to Valentin Guillod's win left the pair on tied points with Herlings young team-mate Pauls Jonass – arguably the better of the three challengers in sand conditions – just 10 points adrift. In fact, only 30 points separate the complete top five so it's anyone's game.

In every competition there are always two stories to tell and wherever there's a winner there's a loser. In this year's WMX world championship two camps left the sixth and final round at Loket singing different tunes. Livia Lancelot started the weekend championship leader and did what she had to by putting away championship rival Kiara Fontanesi in the first of the two motos.

Moto two and it was over before it started – literally. While on the sighting lap lady Lancelot's bike packed up so she sprinted back to the pits and tried to enter the waiting zone on

her spare machine but was denied entry – and therefore the championship. A devastating blow for the Frenchie but elation for Fontanesi who casually scooped up the title for the fourth year on the trot.

A couple of years ago the FIM ruled that girls with long hair must tie it up to minimise the risk of it getting caught in any moving parts. In Latvia young American rider Thomas Covington was looking a little different with a new 'do' that very much wasn't his choice. Apparently, Covington had been approached by the FIM on a couple of occasions about his reckless Barnet and having taken no action – not even a brush through – he was told he would not be allowed to start unless he swung by the salon. Needless to say, he came to Latvia with a short back and sides...

Ando on a two-stroke? Yup! North Eastern ripper Brad Anderson took a wildcard ride at the EMX300 round in Loket as a favour to GL12 Yamaha team owner Bob Buchanan and was head and shoulders above the competition, smoking everyone in both races. Ando had a great time and loved putting the British flag above the top step of the podium so shortly afterwards signed himself up for the following weekend in Lommel. On it Ando!

In recent years Yamaha hasn't been the most successful brand across the board – that title usually gets handed to KTM – but in Loket the boys in blue absolutely cleaned up! Romain Febvre (MXGP), Guillod (MX2), Nancy van de Ven (WMX) and Anderson (EMX300) all took the spoils in their respective classes and only dropped one moto victory from the collective bunch when Guillod finished second in the MX2 opener – for god sake Valentin, bloody useless!

Nathan Watson has rebounded from his





Marc Coma will take on a new role as Sporting Director of the Dakar

early season injury to steadily improve as he picks up experience and momentum at each race and he finally cracked the top 10 with two 10th places for 10th overall at Loket. I heard that he was pencilled in to keep his spot on the IceOne Husky team for next season even before Czecho and with a few sand tracks coming up – definitely his preferred surface – I think he will likely cement that position within the team in the next few weeks.

Shaun Simpson is going to race in the States. Not for good but as a one-off to fulfil an ambition, organised by himself and funded by a couple of his super-helpful personal sponsors from his native land. Simmo is defending British champion, current runaway leader of the 2015 British championship, a top eight GP regular and top privateer in MXGP. He'll be racing round 10 of the Lucas Oil AMA Pro Motocross Nationals at Unadilla which is widely recognised as a 'GP styled track'.

The KTM factory has now stepped forward to offer him some extra assistance to show his potential and stumped up a 2016 factory 450 and support for his time there. Pit Beirer also commented that Shaun is in his plans for factory equipment next year to help him elevate his assault on MXGP, stating that although he doesn't feel it's best Shaun joins the factory team – he believes he needs a unique atmosphere within a team to thrive – he will support him from the factory on whatever team he rides. Provided it's a KTM one of course!

Apparently Tommy Searle could well be on the move for next season. According to another interview with KTM boss Beirer, he said he gave Tommy a chance this season because he is a nice guy with a great history at KTM but, astonishingly, his best overall this season has

been a 10th and he's only finished inside the top 10 in a moto once with a ninth in Loket! In no uncertain terms, Beirer said that those results just don't cut it but he still has time to retain his spot – although he needs to act now! However, Tommy has also been linked with a Suzuki ride and even a 450 berth on DRT Kawi for Steve Dixon.

One of the world's most talented and unique racers is looking likely to continue turning us on for another couple of seasons. Christophe Pourcel has agreed terms with the Rockstar Husky team in the States to continue to ride 450 indoor and outdoor for them through 2017! It's a really exciting prospect to have him confirm he will stick around as he's come and gone over the past few years and no-one really knew what he was doing from one minute to the next. He has only gotten better in this year's 450 MX championship – he currently sits fifth – after getting the call up a short time before the season started to fill in for an injured rider. With a full pre-season of prep, Pourcel will be bad ass indoors and out next season.

The craziest story to surface from last month has got to be the injury to Matt Moss who collided with a Bobcat track machine at the last round of the Australian Nationals. The multi-time Aussie champ melted the side of a mini-digger during a Superpole lap at Shepperton – yep, you read that correct, he hit the side of a bit of heavy machinery as it manoeuvred across the track while he was head down and ass up trying to lay down a heater.

How did that happen? Essentially, it was a breakdown in communication. A volunteer track worker took to the circuit to smooth over some tyre tracks created by the water bowser and was unaware of the impending Superpole >>



## NEW DIRECTION!

### INJURED EWC STAR PELA RENET SET FOR RALLY SWITCH

Set for a change of direction, two-time EWC champ Pela Renet will become part of the official Husqvarna Factory Racing Team for the upcoming Dakar, alongside rally veteran Ruben Faria. Piloting Husqvarna's yet unseen FS450 Rally bike, the Frenchman has decided to focus 100 per cent on the new challenge that lies ahead.

Alongside Antoine Meo and Ivan Cervantes who will be also competing at the 2016 Dakar Rally, Renet will be one of many enduro champs who've decided to leave the special tests of the EWC for a career in the long stages in South America.



## BUSTED!

### HAVE THE 2017 KTM EXCS ALREADY BEEN RELEASED IN THE WILD?

Despite Lars Enock's best efforts to convince everyone he was riding a production motocross bike with 'minor modifications' at this year's Red Bull Romaniacs, there are good reasons to believe he's heavily involved in the development of KTM's next generation of two-stroke enduro machines.

The bike that Lars rode to ninth overall in the Gold class featured PDS rear suspension – not a linkage like all latest KTM motocross bikes. Nice try Lars! The engine cases were redesigned and hosted an engine-integrated starter motor that replaced the external plastic unit. Lars' bike also featured a Mikuni carburettor. Why? Well, we'll just have to wait few more months until the truth's revealed...



Shaun Simpson can rely on KTM factory support for his American Odyssey

Klara Fontanesi secured her fourth WMX title on the bounce



session. Matt was in hospital for well over a week afterwards and said he felt lucky to be alive.

Gert Krestinov was looking like being only the second man to take a 'W' from Simmo this year as he holed out and showed the champ the fast way around the Foxhill circuit for all bar the last three laps in the final moto of the day. Gert is renowned for his sand skills and Foxhill couldn't have been any more opposite so it was quite a surprise to many.

But where was his Buildbase Honda team-mate Kristian Whatley at Foxhill? Whatley had already made a comeback to racing after his recent collarbone injury but was ruled out after further surgery was required to add a larger plate to the damaged bone after the original metalwork got unsettled. He's expected back again soon though.

Nev Bradshaw is back! Nev returned to Maxxis action at Foxhill as the 'Seth Efrican' took over the Heads & All Threads Suzuki of Harri Kullas. Although MIA from the Maxxis, Nev has still been on the bike at home and abroad when he can in between his riding schools. He's been competing on a Yamaha 450 in the South African Nationals and doing the damage, too. His deal with the Heads & All Threads Suzuki team doesn't go any further than a race-by-race basis but Nev is keen to get back on the scene permanently and admits that he didn't leave competitive racing in the UK because he wanted to but because financially he had to.

The annual Patchquick Trophy took place at Little Silver on the outskirts of Exeter this year and the way was paved for a new champ as multi-time winner Whatley was injured. Jake Shipton, Josh Gilbert and Todd

Kellett were three of the notable names ready to scratch their initials onto the winner's trophy and eventually Shipton earned the bragging rights with a clean sweep of moto wins.

The MX Nationals series has pulled the trigger on its 2016 plans early and already pencilled in dates. The plan is to hold a series that doesn't clash with any British, European or BYN rounds next year to get the strongest domestic field possible.

#### **The provisional 2016 dates are...**

**Rnd 1 – February 27/28**

**Rnd 2 – March 19/20**

**Rnd 3 – April 9/10**

**Rnd 4 – May 7/8**

**Rnd 5 – July 30/31**

**Rnd 6 – September 3/4**

Tracks are being finalised but are likely to be Preston Docks, Canada Heights, Wakes Colne, Landrake, Foxhill and Hawkstone Park – not necessarily in that order.

There was an interesting announcement that the ACU made recently regarding rider health and safety at its events which is in effect as of now. The ACU is strongly enforcing rules governing concussions and has issued new policy guidelines to all members to highlight the dangers from concussion and the required recovery time for riders affected.

The guidelines state that riders who have sustained concussion will immediately be placed on a stop list and must adhere to a mandatory lay-off period before returning to racing. The first notable 'victim' of the rule was young ripper Jay Hague of the DRT Kawi team. Jay was leading the MX2 championship but crashed in moto one at Blaxhall and was suspected of picking up a concussion. Contrary to what Jay felt, he wasn't cleared by the onsite doctor or the ACU to race the remainder of the day, essentially ruling him out for the title.

In all honesty, if he did in fact have a concussion it was probably the best decision because a rider's health should come before championship points.

July is always a month full of pure enduro action with this year being no exception. It's the time when the world's top extreme riders battle it out in the Carpathian Mountains hunting for glory at Red Bull Romaniacs.

The annual event attracts competitors from

almost every corner of the world and ran its 11th edition in 2015, producing more drama than ever before. In the closest dual of all time two Brits – you know who they are – battled it out for top honours. Let's just say the event was as popular as ever, with a new Romaniacs style race panned for South America next year.

But Romaniacs certainly wasn't the only newsworthy story during July and an unexpected personal announcement appearing on Marc Coma's social media pages earlier in the month certainly got tongues wagging.

After a hugely successful career with five Dakar wins from 12 starts plus six world rally championships, Coma has decided it's the right time to retire. Instead of trying to equal Stephane Peterhansel's record of six victories on a bike or give Dakar a go in a car, the Spanish star accepted the role of Sporting Director of the Dakar offered to him by French organiser ASO.

Devoid of any sponsor caps or t-shirts, Coma gave a press conference a few days later officially announcing his retirement in front of Spanish media and trying to explain the reasons that led him to this decision. The interesting thing is that a couple of months ago an official press release from KTM announced Marc's decision to keep on working with the team and his plans to race the Dakar in 2016. What really happened? We might never actually know...

As a true professional Coma immediately focused on his new duties. He attended Spain's Baja Aragon as Dakar's ambassador and now has to come up with the final selection of riders from hundreds registered for the 2016 event. Coma might be following a new path in his life but at the same time next January's Dakar suddenly has everyone asking the same question - who'll win it? With Coma out and Cyril Despres racing cars we can only be sure that the 2016 race will see a new winner after more than 10 years.

In other news, July also marked the first time the EWC visited Belgium. Among those racing were Enduro 2 class duo David Knight and Tom Sagar who gave the EWC a go as part of their preparations for this year's ISDE in Slovakia. They'll be both part of the British ISDE Trophy Team along EWC regular Jamie McCanney, Jamie Lewis, Joe Wooton and Jack Rowland.





# SHOWTIME!

## GET GEARED UP FOR THE INTERNATIONAL DIRT BIKE SHOW...

The pace is picking up for the 2015 edition of the International Dirt Bike Show, which kicks off on Thursday October 29.

The heavyweights of the industry from the worlds of motocross, enduro and trials are already signed up for this year, with other major players and brands primed to confirm their requirements.

The Dirt Bike Show is considered by many to be the upmarket shop-window for the UK off-road industry and the organiser is continuing the popular format of separating display-only areas from the retail areas, thereby providing clearly defined zones for visitors to navigate their way around the Stoneleigh Park halls. This means that the main exhibition hall will again house a vibrant and diverse display of manufacturers, aftermarket clothing and accessories distributors, racing associations and the like, many of whom are ringing the changes with a different stand size and layout this year.

On the machine front, expect to see the latest from Honda, Husqvarna, Kawasaki, KTM, Rieju, Yamaha, Beta, Sherco and Mecatecno. Other notable signings in the display arena include Dunlop, Michelin, Talon, Apico, CI Sport, MH Suspension, Ifor Williams Trailers, Madison, D-Zign, Judd Racing, Putoline, MCE Insurance, MH Suspension, Rock Oil, SC Sporthomes, Sport Tec, the ACU, AMCA, BSMA and YSMA.

Elsewhere, and even now getting prepared to open for business in the retail hall are Pro-Carbon, Pulse, Mojo, Pitbitz, Eurotek KTM, Grasshopper, Super MX, Ossur, Middleton MX, MD Racing, Race Spec, Renapur, 1st MX, BRP, Sun Leisure, Central Wheel, Chaneco, Enduro Tyres, Fro Systems, HRS, LR Designs, Matt Gardiner MX, Moto 4, Motopross, MXR Racing, Pro Green, RHL, Road & Trials, Shop for Bikers, Step Forward, Stormer MX, Surf & Turf, Ultimate Trophies and Venhill.

And, of course, your favourite off-road publications – Dirt Bike Rider and TMX will be right in the centre of it all, parked up next to the hall two stage which will again be a hive of activity with games and interviews steered by the authoritative, off-road fact-sharing Jack Burnicle.

As a destination, the Show is of course equally as popular for its raft of live entertainment and have-a-go activities. This year will be no exception, as visitors can expect the schedule to be cranked right up to ensure all members of the family share a show experience to remember. As we go to press, it is confirmed that the incredibly popular Minibike Champs will return with the International Dirt Bike Show Minibike Supercross and a bigger, better and more spectacular track. Racing will run over the four days of the show with a new race format incorporating eight action-packed classes catering for 50cc Kids right the way through to Pro 160cc.

The fun starts even before you enter the show halls, as the gravity-defying Wall of Death will be situated out front adjacent to the catering units, and then once inside, the activity halls will house the jaw-dropping Arena Trials organised by Martin Lampkin, kids quads, Strider bikes and the have-a-go Electric Zone.



For more International Dirt Bike Show news and updates, and to buy your advance tickets, be sure to visit and bookmark [www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk](http://www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk) and whilst there, remember to 'like' the Show's FaceBook, or follow the Twitter feed.

### BUY IN ADVANCE

Tickets for the Dirt Bike Show are now on sale and buying in advance offers a substantial saving over buying on-the-door, particularly on Discount Thursday. Advance adult ticket holders, aged 16 and over, will only pay £8 for entry on the Show's opening day, which represents a massive 50 per cent discount. Travel with your family and friends and there are even more ways to save a quid or two, as a family advance ticket for two adults and two children aged 11 to 15 years for the Thursday will cost just £24, with children aged 10 and under gaining free admission. Or, get a bunch of mates together and, for every ten adult tickets bought, the 11th Discount Thursday ticket is free! There is no booking fee and parking at the venue is absolutely free.

### GET THE APP

The official International Dirt Bike Show 'App' is the bang-up-to-the-minute way for busy, on-the-go, off-road and Show enthusiasts to obtain the latest news and updates. Available for IOS and Android users, it can be downloaded completely free-of-charge at [www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk](http://www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk) and provides quick and easy access to all the latest Show information and features, with a simple click of a button, or a tap on the screen. The App will also allow you to buy advance tickets from the box office, provide venue information, assist with route planning to and from the Show and, nearer the time of the event, will display the latest Show site plan to help show-goers find out which companies and brands are exhibiting and where they're located.



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The question you'll need to answer is this – what is the price of an adult ticket bought in advance for the Show's opening day, Thursday 29th October 2015?



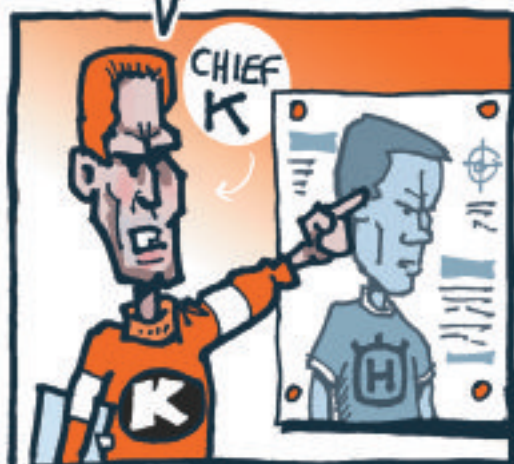
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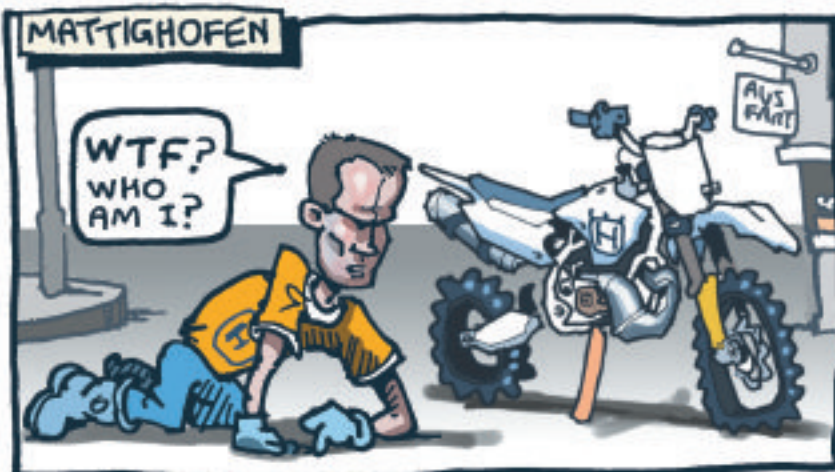
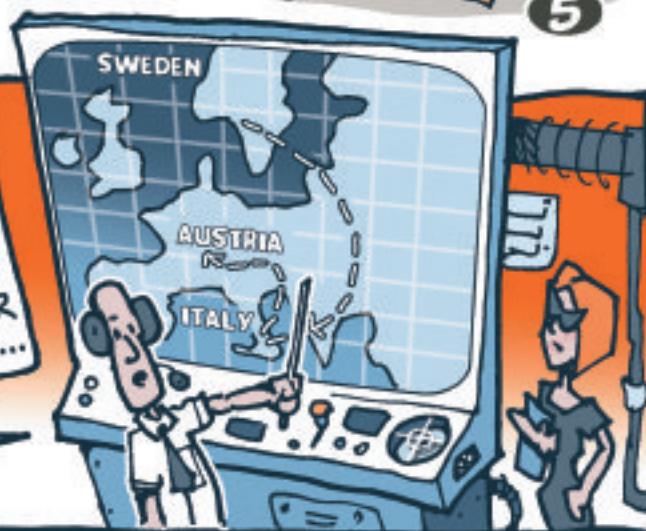
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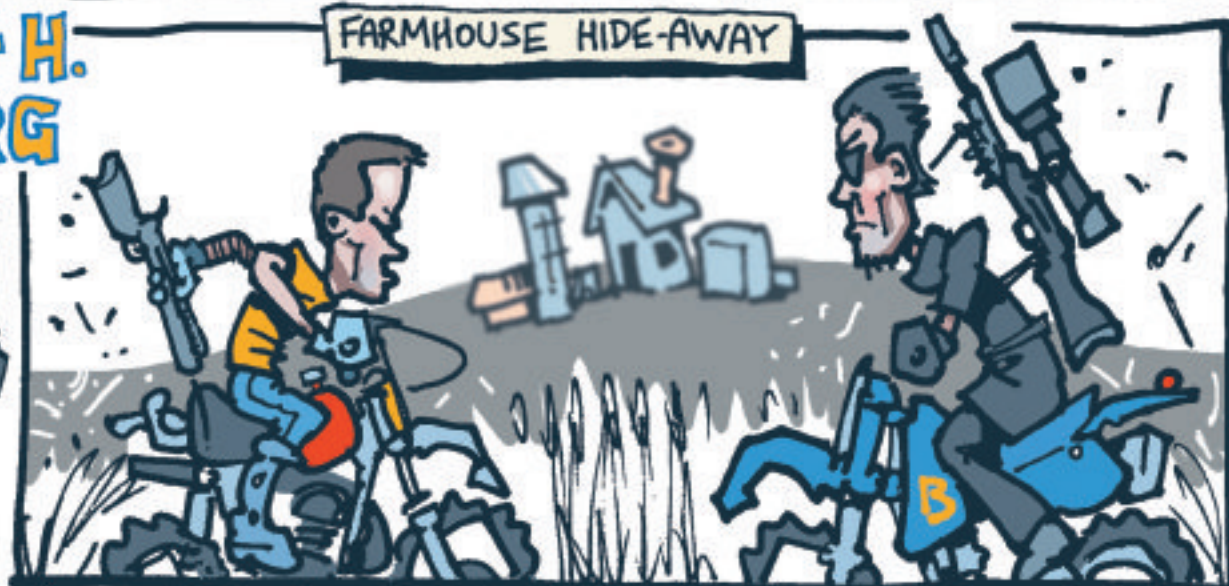


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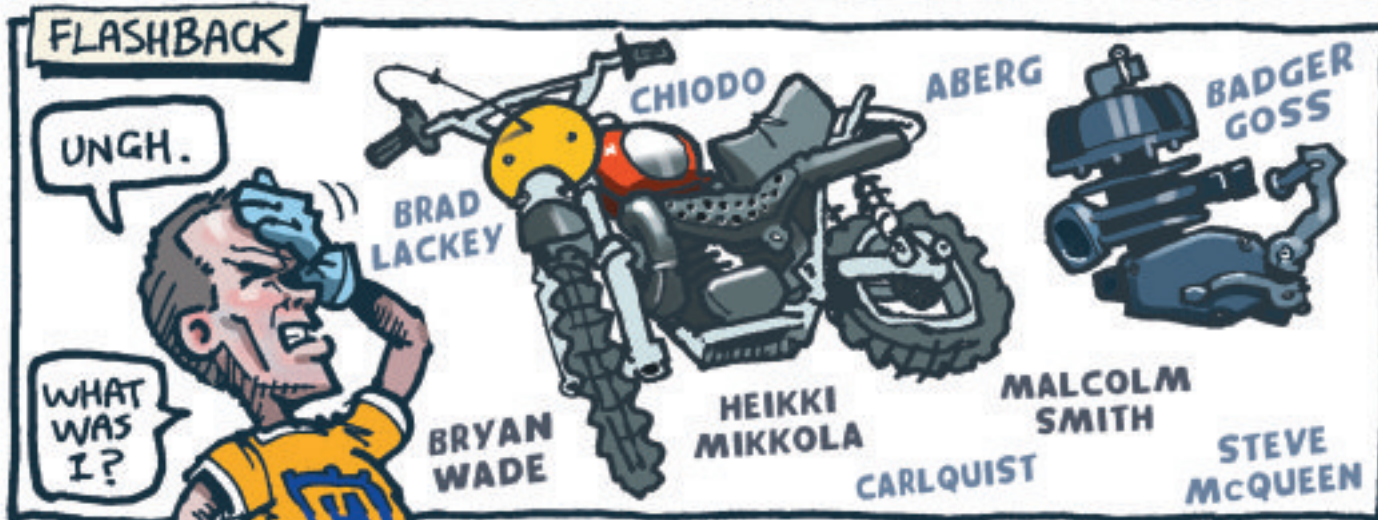
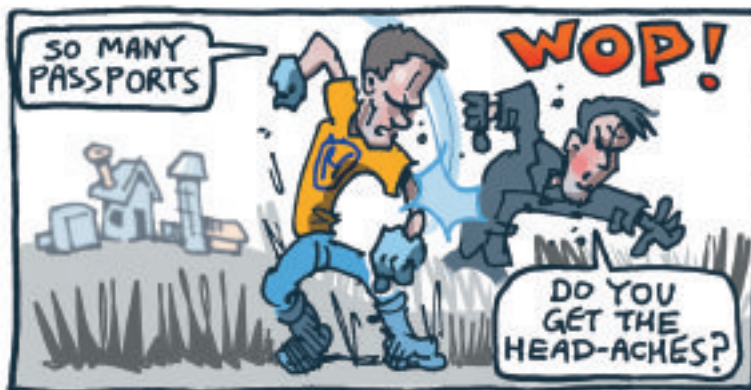


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# INGS!

Since he turned Pro in America in 2009 it's been a steep learning curve for Max Anstie but six years, seven teams and five different makes of machinery later he reckons he's a stronger rider because of it...

Words by **Sean Lawless** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**



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Ken Roczen chooses the PODIUM CFT handlebar in the CHAMP bend to keep control during the 2015 season.



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M

ax Anstie has grown up in public. A magazine star at the age of seven and tipped to be a future world champion before he was even in his teens, as a youth racer Max was mentioned alongside Ken

Roczen and Jeffrey Herlings as part of the next wave of obscenely talented young stars about to explode onto the scene.

But while Roczen and Herlings went on to win world titles and – in the German's case – enjoy success in America, the rapid redhead from Hampshire took an altogether more unconventional path and, it seems, got a little lost along the way. Luckily for Max, his fans and UK motocross he's back on track and at 22 years old is a genuine candidate for grand prix wins.

Racing for the Monster Energy DRT Kawasaki team, Max sits seventh in the MX2 world championship – even though he's missed one GP through injury – and is leading the Maxxis series despite the same injury forcing him to sit

out the opening round.

I first got to know Max back in Y2K when he was starring alongside his dad, former 500GP rider Mervyn, in a series of magazine features entitled 'Auto Focus' aimed at teaching skills to young riders. It was crystal clear even then that the freckle-faced seven-year-old, silky-smooth on his Husky Boy 50, was something special and he backed up his potential with a string of impressive results.

"When I was seven I was British champion. I won Farleigh Castle, the Battle of Bushton, the All-British – they were the three main things when I was on a little 50 – and I went over to the States a couple of times to race.

"When I got off the 50 I got onto the Team Green programme with Steve Guttridge. That was pretty cool and I raced in England for a couple more years and then when I was 10 I went over to Holland most weekends and just rode the Dutch championship for four years. I'd go over there on a Friday afternoon, come back Sunday night and be at school Monday morning. I did that until I was 14 on a big-wheel 85." >>



Max has won every moto that he's started in this year's Maxxis series





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That's two different marques in seven years – nothing unconventional there, yet – and while racing abroad was hardly the standard career path for a young Brit back then it's become increasingly common. By this point he was writing a monthly column in DBR and this, combined with a string of successes in the Future West SX series, meant his profile back home was still high.

Naturally, Merv's had a huge influence on his son and while he would later play a part in some of Max's more, er, unusual career choices the reasoning behind his switch to the Dutch series was rock-solid.

"My dad was always one for technique and skills so he'd take me supercross riding during the week and then to go and race sand at the weekend. I think he struggled in the sand a little bit so it was all about me being able to be the full package, being able to ride everything.

"Obviously my dad has been a massive influence on where I'm at now with riding and how I ride. I wouldn't know what it would be like without having him training me but I think it's been a big advantage.

"We had some brilliant facilities – where we did the Auto Focus shoots for example – and I never did motos or things like that, it was always about technique, learning skills, learning to jump, rhythm, stuff like that. It made it all really fun and I've just kept it rolling."

It was during his time racing in Holland that Max first encountered Herlings and Roczen.

"Obviously, Jeffrey used to live there and race the Dutch championship so I raced him every weekend from when I was 10. It was really good – it took me a few years but I finally got the Dutch championship [in 2007] which was pretty

cool. Roczen did a little bit but he seemed to do more 250 stuff. I obviously raced him at the world 85s and a Dutch race every now and again so, yeah, I grew up racing all those guys really."

As well as winning the Dutch title in 2007 Max was second in the one-round world 85cc championship in Bulgaria behind Roczen and third in the EMX series ahead of Herlings with more race wins than any other rider.

For the following season he switched manufacturer for the third time and moved to America.

Max made a brief return to Europe in 2008 for the world 85cc championship in Holland – he won the opening moto from Herlings before his carburettor fell off in race two – but his future appeared to be firmly rooted Stateside.

"I was a factory junior KTM rider and I got to ride with Jason Anderson who was my team-mate. I was racing the amateur series with Eli Tomac and all the other guys who are up there now in America. That was obviously a dream when I was younger."

But Max's American dream began to go pear-shaped when the AMA started talking about making a rule that would mean riders had to be 18 to turn Pro. It was never introduced but at the time everyone took it seriously and Max found himself fast-tracked into the Pro ranks. Because of the timing there was no place on the adult factory KTM team for him so he took a ride for notorious AMA bad boy Jason Lawrence.

"I ended up literally coming off an 85 in November and then in May when I was just turned 16 I remember being lined up next to Jake Weimer at Glen Helen. That was 2009 at the start of the outdoor season. I was contracted to factory KTM as a youngster but >>





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Max's return to the GP scene saw him lining up next to Tommy Searle



A year on the Gariboldi Honda team netted mixed results



Inconsistency marred Max's move to Rockstar Suzuki



Steve Dixon gets ready to radio in Anstie's breakfast order



because of my age and the rule change I kinda got bummed out of a deal really. I had to turn pro and the only spot was with J-Law but he was actually a pretty cool boss."

It was a tough season but Max battled his way to 18th outdoors and the following year he picked up a place on the Star Racing Yamaha team.

His 2010 results were impressive with ninth in the West Coast SX championship – including a fourth in San Diego – backed up by 20th outdoors after missing the last third of the season. His best Nationals result was fourth in the second race at Freestone ahead of riders including Trey Canard, Justin Barcia, Tomac and Tommy Searle but when he was racing he was inconsistent and failed to score points in seven of the 16 motos he started.

"I got some good results and nearly won a supercross – I was young and made some mistakes but I learned a lot."

Max returned to Europe in 2011 to race for CLS Kawasaki – his third different bike and team in as many years – and appeared to have overcome his problem with inconsistency to finish sixth in the world.

"I was Tommy's team-mate so it was pretty cool. We lived down in France for a little bit in the off-season and then in Belgium with my dad. I didn't really like it in Belgium – I felt very alienated – but it was a good debut season. There were a lot of ups and downs and some bumps along the road but it was nice to be back in Europe."

Returning to Europe and a familiar manufacturer could have brought some stability back into Max's career but the MX merry-go-round hadn't stopped spinning for him...

"Then I had a year on a Gariboldi Honda and lived in Italy, then I rode for factory Suzuki for a year and then I went to Dixon Yamaha and all of a sudden it became Dixon Kawasaki. >>>





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A familiar sight for the Maxxis pack...



## Domestic god Mighty Max...

Bloody hell, I've been on a lot of different bikes.

"In a way it would have been more beneficial for me to either stay with KTM in America or stay with CLS but for one reason or another the decisions were made for me that I had to move on. I can look back on it and think I shouldn't have done this or shouldn't have done that but I was still young, I felt like I didn't really know what I was doing with deals or anything like that."

The constant change of teams and machinery must have had a negative influence on Max. From sixth in the world he slipped back to seventh, then 10th and then 12th but throughout our interview Max's positivity shines through. He clearly sees himself as having been on a voyage of discovery and feels that he's finally captain of his own ship.

"Italy was the turning point and I started to figure things out for myself. I made the decision to go to Suzuki and I actually found a really good group of guys there who were very professional. It was a shame that things didn't work out but to come back home to Steve Dixon was a good thing for me. I've come a long way in the last few years.

"Italy was the first time I lived on my own and

had to do my own cooking and things. I was growing up and there were certain aspects that weren't great but at the end of the day the team did the best they could and worked hard and I appreciate everything they did. And I feel like now I'm a better person for it all."

His slide down the world rankings since his return to GPs disguises some very good results – most notably an overall win at Lommel in 2014 – but he was again inconsistent.

"I had some good races but I was still at the point where I only wanted to win and I didn't understand why I wasn't doing better but learning from the last few years it's understanding that the whole package is needed to do the job. You need all the bits of the puzzle and you need to be happy as well. You can't just do it on your own. You need a good group of people around you. You need to be solid in your programme.

"I won a grand prix last year, I led both races in Qatar, I had some of the best races of my life and it's put me in a position this year where I can be solid and up there so at the end of the day I had the best year. Okay, so the end result wasn't great but anyone who was at the races will know that last year was a struggle for myself and for >>>

It's hard to believe but once you take the AMA outdoors out of the equation this year's Maxxis series is Max's first full season racing an adult national championship.

"It's been really nice to race the British championship. Like I keep saying, those guys are really fast. Obviously I feel strong in my programme with the grands prix and things like that but it's been good to come back and race on different tracks and those guys keep me on my toes – okay, I have been winning but I have to be on my A game."

After missing the opening round through injury Max has won nine out of 12 motos with just three second-placed finishes behind Herlings at Hawkstone spoiling his perfect score.

"I feel like I'm slightly stronger in moto distance. I feel like I can keep banging out the laps but I think that's what GPs do to you, they grind it into you that you've got to be solid and you can't make mistakes.

"I'm actually more nervous before British championship races sometimes than GPs. Because I've been doing them for so long at GPs I've got a plan dialled. I know when I'm eating, I know when I'm sleeping, I know when I'm looking at the track, I know when I'm going down to the start, I know what I do when a race finishes. At a British all my plans get thrown out of the window and I just have to adapt.

"But it's been really cool and a nice experience and I hope we can continue to get good results – the goal is to keep plugging away and hopefully by the end of the year have the British championship."



my team. We had to change to the new bike and for one reason or another we didn't finish a lot of races."

This year started off badly for Max with a race two crash at the GP opener in Qatar that forced him out of the second round in Thailand. But he's been on the front foot ever since with a string of top-three moto finishes including a race win in Germany. Currently seventh in the standings, Max's optimistic of having a title shot in 2016 – even though his DRT deal ends this year and he could find himself changing machinery for the eighth time in eight seasons.

"Next year we're seeing what's going to happen but I appreciate everything Steve's done and we're working really hard. He does everything he can to build the best bike and I do everything I can to go as fast as I can.

"The plan is another year in MX2. It will be my last year so it would be stupid if the goal wasn't to win the world title. I feel like I'm preparing myself as well as I can for that and we've still got the rest of this year to go and I want to keep banging out good results and putting myself in podium positions. I just want consistency – that's what I've been lacking in the last few years."

The Max you see today is a man in control of

his own destiny. He thinks for himself, he makes his own decisions, he's faced a steeper learning curve than possibly anyone else in the GP paddock and has developed the mindset needed to turn this to his own advantage.

"I was told what to do. I literally got up in the morning and rode. I didn't know what colour the bike was going to be. I was made to ride and work but at the end of the day I had to go through it all and I feel like I'm a better person for it. I could say 'I wish I could have done this' or 'I wish I'd done that' but you've got to look at the positives.

"No-one's been on as many bikes but I've learned a lot. I've learned what I like in a bike and I've learned how to work myself and I do feel really solid right now. I know my programme, I'm happy with my programme, I know where I'm at and what I'm doing and I feel good at the races.

"My mum comes to the races, my dad's also involved. It's really good that I've brought the people back into my life I want yet I'm still my own person and do my own thing with the team. I've got people around me who want to be around me and it's great to have lots of support. I genuinely couldn't be happy than I am now."







## Mini Max...

"I was quite small when I was 16 – I was still good on an 85 – and in a way it's really taken me until now to feel like I'm the right size for a 250. So I did get thrown in at the deep end. I was quick – I could go the speed, just not for very long and then I'd crash and hurt myself.

"That could have been different. Tomac waited and came in really strong with Geico but I had to almost start at the bottom and build my way up. When I look back at pictures of myself I was like a little weed. Why didn't someone tell me that I needed to have protein shakes or something to build me up because I was like a stick.

"But it is what it is and at the end of the day I was put in those situations but I feel like I've learned a lot and I'm probably one of the only guys who has raced AMA Nationals and GPs and I've won a grand prix now and I'm making my way up the ladder."

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Words by Ryan Houghton





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**B**eing a semi-professional motocrosser is a strange old gig. There I was working for my dad when my old mate – the travelling MX encyclopaedia – James Williams rings up to say DBR wanted me to test the 2016 Yams. Get in there my son! To be honest I thought this Suttu geezer was either taking the mick or had been on the sauce to pick me for the job.

Once I'd got over the shock I was right eager to get going. However I guess I was a bit nervous to start with because I've never done a full-on bike test before, I haven't ridden the test track before and I'm pretty sure I haven't written a 2000 word article before. What could go wrong?

Despite all the reservations above hopefully some of you will know that I've raced Yamahas for the past three seasons so I should be able to give you a fair explanation of what's good and what's not about the new blue machines.

After listening to Eric Eggens (former GP winner and now Yamaha Motor Europe Motocross racing manager) explain all the changes that Yamaha intended to make with their new bikes we got to have a look at the gear and I have to say that appear pretty smart in stock form. This might partly be because I think the standard Yams look more like their factory counterparts (at least on the outside)

than any of the other manufacturers. I like the plain look anyway, I always have done.

For the 2016 450F Yamaha stated that they wanted to make four major improvements and on the whole they've pretty much cleared the faults that I experience with my 2015 bike. I was happy to hear Eggens talk about how hard Yamaha have worked to improve the 2015 model because I've spent a long time and a fair bit of money trying to overcome niggly problems and the 2016 YZ450F comes in bang on the money.

I'm gonna start with a negative however, just to get it out of the way because I genuinely love the 450. Yamaha have fitted a Launch Control System (LCS) with the aim of giving you the rider 'faster starts with more control'. Straightaway I'm going to disagree with that statement.

From a racers point of view I know that I could have started faster using my own feel on the bike. The LCS is active in first and second gear and the clutch bite feels laboured. Once you shift into third the LCS disables but the engine doesn't pull because the revs aren't high enough. For me this is not elective for fast starting.

On the other hand for a hobby or amateur rider the system would be useful on slippery surfaces because it allows you to concentrate on body position. I just didn't think it would

work in sand or when there is big traction because there simply aren't enough revs.

Now that's the bad stuff done I can give you the good news. This new 450 is way better in standard form than my 2015 model. Yamaha have changed the standard ECU mapping keeping the raw power but making it more manageable. This takes away the snappy aggressive feel of the 2015 model which in truth was a bit of an animal. The bike and power characteristics will definitely be more manageable in motos because there's less to worry about. For example when exiting corners you can hit the gas harder than before without the bike getting out of control. This standard map which Yamaha now issue you with straight out of the crate is what I've taken months to find on my race bike so that can only be a plus.

I also enjoyed the refinements that had been made to the gear mechanism and the clutch. Shifting gear felt much lighter on the clutch lever while the shift lever itself had a smooth and positive action. To me the gearing refinements and the change in power characteristics will mean that average and pro riders alike will get an easier ride next season.

Ergonomically Yamaha have lowered the footpegs by 5mm on the 2016 model to improve the package's centre of gravity. Now I'm no scientist but I am a big lump at 6ft 3in and 13 and a half stone so anything that can >>







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lower my COG is mega. It was very noticeable that I was able to change direction quicker allowing me to switch lines more easily, saving energy in the long run.

Another big improvement from my point of view is front end feel on the 2016 edition. I always felt the 2015 bike was a little vague and it meant that the bike was getting away from you all the time. Yamaha have countered this by moving the fork offset from 23mm to 25mm. This 2mm change gave me so much more confidence on corner entry and alongside that 5mm drop in footpeg position the handling has been vastly improved. Confidence is such a big thing when roaring a big 450 into corners and now you can trust the bike to do what you want it to do. I was really quite impressed that I was finally able to turn the bike using the front wheel.

I will say that the front forks felt a tad on the soft side for me but that's probably because I run my Solva units really hard. That won't cause any aggravation to the weekend warrior so unless you're a real big fella like me or really push the front hard the forks should do a perfectly good job. I was impressed with the rear shock though because it's quite soft in feel which makes the bike squat down and gain loads of traction – that must be a good thing when your aim is to enjoy your racing but still make it to work on Monday morning. Being flung down the road with dodgy rear shock is no fun I can tell ya.

The only other big change on the 450 is the addition of a larger front brake disc. Yamaha have upped the disc in standard size from 250mm to 270mm which I think is a good thing. I already run the oversize disc and it is a handy piece of kit. Again it probably comes down to confidence and if you believe in that front disc then your corner entry speed is more likely to improve.

Overall this bike is the nuts, I really liked it. It would certainly be money well spent and even if you don't believe me give it a test – you might surprise yourself because Yamaha have definitely gone to town on their big bike.

The new 250F hasn't had a huge amount of changes for 2016 but blimey is it fun.

Yamaha set out with a plan to enhance their engine usability while improving braking >>

*Ryan reckons the 2016 models are a huge improvement on this year's offerings for riders of all levels*







*If flickaboutable was a word it'd  
be an excellent one to describe  
next year's blue bikes*





An Akrapovic muffler is one of the added extras on the 60th Anniversary models



There's no denying that the yellow bikes are beauties but then so are the blue ones too – hmmm...



## TECH SPECS!

### YZ450F

Displacement: 449cc  
Bore and stroke: 97 x 60.8mm  
Transmission: 5 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin 44mm EFI  
Front suspension: Kayaba AOS USD forks  
Rear suspension: Kayaba monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/315mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 270/245 mm  
Wheel base: 1480mm  
Ground clearance: 330mm  
Seat height: 965mm  
Fuel capacity: 7.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 112kg

### YZ250F

Displacement: 250cc  
Bore and stroke: 77 x 53.6mm  
Transmission: 5 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin 44mm EFI  
Front suspension: KYB Speed-Sensitive System USD forks  
Rear suspension: Kayaba monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 310/315mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 270/245 mm  
Wheel base: 1480mm  
Ground clearance: 330mm  
Seat height: 965mm  
Fuel capacity: 7.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 105kg

power and controllability. I would say they have achieved that by the bucket load. In essence the 250 has taken the same refinements as its big brother like the new 270mm front brake disc and a new clutch boss with increased surface flatness for precise and accurate operation. The transmission also gets a stronger spring on the shift stopper 'giving a smoother and more accurate shifting under pressure'.

The piston is lighter too which is designed to improve combustion efficiency and top end performance. The biggest thing for me as a racer is how easy this bike is to ride. I rode the 250 a lot on the test day, basically because I didn't want to get off it.

The French test track called Vinci Manoeuvre had everything you needed, fast and slow corners, long jumps, steep jumps the whole bundle. The 250 just ate it up and Yamaha can be safe in the knowledge that their engine usability enhancements have worked. You can really take the piss with this bike, really push it and it wouldn't bite you on the arse.

It's funny really because I haven't been on a 250F for a couple of years but this new YZF made me miss riding the smaller bike. By the end of the day I felt that if I decided to drop

back to MX2 I could really be competitive on this bike. The motor is really fast and although the front forks were a bit soft for me I still felt well in control pushing the bike to its limits. I don't think the average rider would go very far wrong if they chose to go blue for 2016.

The best example I can think of to show how much confidence can do for you is Valentin Guillod. While he was riding the standard 250 I was on the big bike (just about keeping up) and you can see how much he is at one with the bike. He really enters the corners hard and launches jumps to the flat. That can only mean he has complete confidence in his machinery and his GP results are really a testimony to that. If a rider like Guillod can throw around a standard machine like he does a tricked up race bike then bike's motor and suspension must be in handy working order.

I can safely say that I fell in love with the 250F and praise Yamaha for bringing a bit a joy to my heart...I wasn't even sweating afterwards so it was both a pleasure and not too hard on the old bones, the perfect combo for the club ace.

The final bikes Yam had on display was their 60th anniversary edition bikes which are basically a standard 250 or 450F with a

few added extras. Obviously the bike comes in good old fashioned Yellow and black Speedblock design.

As well as its evocative colour scheme, this Limited Edition models will be equipped with slip on Akrapovic mufflers, GYTR clutch covers and hand protectors and will also be supplied with the Yamaha Power Tuner for quick and easy trackside ECU reprogramming.

These bikes look mega in the retro colours but they really didn't tickle my nuts. I didn't notice any difference using the Akrapovic exhaust and the rest of the gear is just decorative. Maybe the tuner would be of use to some people but you probably have to be quite clever to get the most out of it. The bikes are beauties if you have the extra wedge but I reckon the serious rider should stick to the standard version because to me they're great as they are.

Well done to Yamaha overall on all their changes big and small, I think they are on to a winner with their 2016 machines and if their GP and AMA boys continue in their rich vein of form the club scene might be turning blue in the coming months.





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# VAMPIRE KILLERS!

Jonny Walker and Graham Jarvis  
crush the competition in Count  
Dracula's back yard as the Red Bull  
Romaniacs livens things up in  
the Carpathian Mountains...

Words and photos by **Future7Media**



ROMANIACS









# ROMAN



*It's fairly common for each stage to start with a river crossing – you can't beat riding for eight hours with wet feet!*



*As defending champ Jonny Walker was hounded by the press all week long*



**T**he Red Bull Romaniacs never fails to deliver. The world's toughest Hard Enduro Rallye is always full of surprises, twists and turns as a multitude of riders do battle against the Romanian Carpathian Mountains for one-week in July.

At the head of the field, the fight for outright honours was a fierce affair between KTM's Jonny Walker and Husqvarna's Graham Jarvis.

Walker – the defending champion – needed to prove his 2014 win wasn't a fluke. For Jarvis – the most successful rider in the 12-year history of the event – well, he simply wanted his crown back.

For four days straight – plus the infamous city prologue – the duo went back and forth as they chased each other down. Finally though, after a gruelling 24 hours of racing and some 500 kilometres later we had a winner.

By one of the narrowest margins ever seen at

Romaniacs, Walker kept Jarvis at bay to clinch victory by a mere two minutes and 10 seconds. It doesn't get much closer than that.

But the Red Bull Romaniacs is much more than just the two best extreme enduro riders in the world battling it out. For the majority of the competitors from the 37 nations entered, the race is an adventure of a lifetime – an opportunity to tick one more thing off the bucket list and say 'I've been there man, I've lived it...'



# ROMANIANCS



## Zealander

### Catching up with Kiwi charger Angus McDonald

Thanks to Chris Birch, the Red Bull Romaniacs has always attracted a strong contingent of New Zealanders. Angus McDonald is the next wave of Kiwis to try his hand at extreme enduro. Competing in Silver class, the 18-year-old placed 16th overall with a personal best of sixth on the final day...

"It's been awesome – best thing I've ever ridden on a bike. I'm happy to see the finish line. Looking on it now I think the training we did for this race was probably too extreme. You need to prepare for the hard stuff but it's the six-hour days on a bike that really grinds you down. I could ride the tough climbs but struggled with bike fitness. That was probably the biggest shock. It's also so easy to lose time. You can get stuck on a climb trying to pass people and lose maybe 15 minutes. During the week that all adds up and makes for long days."

## Korean Flavour

### Mr Namki Lee takes on the Iron Class

Giving the 2015 Red Bull Romaniacs a truly international flavour, Namki Lee made the long haul from Korea to compete in the Iron Class he was joined by his good friend Justin Lewis from the USA...

"This has been our first time here and it's definitely blown us away with how good it is. Coming here we knew it was going to be a tough four-day hard enduro but apart from that we had no real idea what Romania was like. We had no idea of the terrain and number of people in the race and simply the scale of the whole thing."

"Our goal was to finish everyday and we've done that. I think the Iron class really suited us. It's a 9.30am start, so it's not too early and the level is right with the navigation easy to grasp."

"The highlight was probably day three. The trail took us high up into the mountains and we came across this ridge with a 1000ft drop to our side that overlooked a huge dam. The desire to stop and look at where we were riding was immense but at the same time you're racing and still have to pay attention. Things like that make this race cool. There's a real wow factor about it."

## Rookie Terror!

### Jonathan Richardson's bittersweet First Taste

Making the switch from trials to extreme enduro in 2015, Jonathan Richardson is quickly finding his feet in the sport. Armed with a top 10 result at Erzberg, the Eurotek KTM rider was keen to sample his first Red Bull Romaniacs. But hopes of a strong result were cut short with a crash on day two...

"Yeah, my first taste of Romaniacs just hasn't

gone to plan. It's disappointing really. An injury on day two wasn't what I wanted. But coming here has been an eye opener – especially for my first time in Gold class. Initially I got a great start in the prologue with the second fastest time in qualification. That was cool, a real confidence boost. It showed that I could do it. Then eighth in the main event was a big positive."

"But after I set off on day one I soon figured out something wasn't quite right with my bike. It was over revving constantly and got really bad to the point where it actually nipped up the

engine. The problem was with the mouse. It was too hard and I had no grip on the climbs."

"Setting off on day two I was keen to catch up the time I lost and had a huge crash. I was riding silly on wet grass. I'd just overtaken about four riders and was pushing too hard for the conditions. I crashed and injured my hand. Instantly I was in pain but rode on for eight hours. I'm putting it down to inexperience – I should have just written day one off as a bad day and moved on."



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Wade Young climbs a mountain trail early on the final day – unfortunately he'd drown his motor in a river and lose lots of time

## Late starter!

### Paul McKie ticks one off his bucket list . . .

You're never too old to start enduro. At 54 years old, Paul McKie joined Eurotek KTM's assistance package to tick the Red Bull Romaniacs off his bucket list...

"I'm 54 years old and this is my first time racing in the Red Bull Romaniacs. I've loved every minute and mile of it. I only started riding enduro at the tender age of 49, but I've watched this race on TV and thought I had to give it a go. And when I found out that the Iron class would suit my ability

level, it was suddenly a no brainer to come. I came with the Eurotek KTM guys as they had put an assistance package together. Mark Jackson has raced this numerous times and is vastly experienced so having him in my corner each day has been a massive help.

"Iron class has been brilliant with some very nice trails – the finish was a little cruel for us, probably not necessary – but that doesn't really take away from the stature of the event. I'm booked in for Sea to Sky now and can't wait. I enjoy the extreme stuff, you don't have to be fast, just methodical – take your time and get through it. I like that. A bit of grit and determination goes a long way in this sport."

## Leading lady!

### Sandra Gomez takes on the Romaniacs

Sandra Gomez is a very experience Endurocross rider with X Games medals to her name. But Red Bull Romaniacs was her first time sampling extreme enduro...

"The first two days were really good and I was meeting all of my time checks. But unfortunately on day three my chance of a better result on day four was lost when I got stuck for about two hours. On one section I saw many riders crash in some rocks so I tried to get around them on the left and I fell down into a ravine. It took ages to get my bike back out.

"But it's been really a lot of fun. It's cool to do the same race as my brother Alfredo. That doesn't happen much. Maybe next year I'll do Silver class. The Bronze wasn't technical enough for me – it was a very fast pace with not so many stoppers. But overall I'm happy with my first ever extreme enduro."



Paul Bolton drops in on the final obstacle...

## Bolts' Near miss!

### Paul Bolton comes close to popping out a podium but no cigar . . .

Paul Bolton – the world's fastest road sweeper – narrowly missed out on a podium result in this year's race. Two minutes shy of third place Alfredo Gomez, Bolton was still happy with his ride...

"I felt fit all week and my bike was mega. I came out early to Romania and spent some days riding to get my head into the terrain. It's very different out here and I usually find it takes me a little bit of time to adapt, especially as it was my first extreme enduro this year.

"Unfortunately, I got let down with the GPS system. In the past I usually get it set up for me but I didn't do that this year and I spent the first two days trying to calibrate it. That's cost me a podium result. But I rode well and I can't really fault that. The bar has been raised this year – the level in the Gold class is ridiculously high now. It's not really a 'ride' anymore but much more a race. Everyone is hauling. So it's cool to see that."



Graham Jarvis battled hard all week but came up just short in his scrap with Jonny Walker

# ROMANIACS Diaries!

## Super spanner spinner Damo Butler's daily duties...

The Red Bull Romaniacs isn't just hard on riders, it's tough on team personnel too. Here's the average day of Damien Butler – mechanic to Graham Jarvis...

**04.00:** Wake up, get dressed and brush my teeth

**04.15:** Meet Graham for breakfast – two yoghurts, orange juice and coffee. Graham has two small packs of Ready Brek and a bowl of muesli

**04.30:** Walk to paddock, collect van and drive back to the hotel

**04.35:** Get in the queue for the GPS unit

**05.00:** GPS handed out

**05.10:** Pick up Graham and drive to the start

**06.00:** Arrive to start, fit GPS to Graham's bike and do final check over

**06.30:** First rider leaves start line. Once Graham is off it's time to drive to the service point

**08.30:** Arrive to service. Setup and make sure everything ready for when the riders arrive. Check Live Timing App and grab a power nap

**11.00:** Graham generally arrives. I've got 20 minutes to check his bike over

**11.20:** Graham leaves. Pack everything back up and head to finish line

**13.00:** Once finished, give Graham a recovery drink and assist with any media duties

**15.00:** Arrive back at paddock and begin service. Get bike washed, rebuilt, replace worn bits, change spark plug, chains, brakes and tyres

**20.00:** Bike prepped and ready for the next day

**21.00:** Attend riders briefing – receive schedule for next day

**21.45:** Dinner plus go over the schedule with Graham

**23.00:** Bed.

**04.00:** Get up and do it all over again!







## Red Bull Romaniacs 2015 Gold Class

- 1 Jonny Walker (KTM) 23:49:42
- 2 Graham Jarvis (Husqvarna) 23:51:22
- 3 Alfredo Gomez (Husqvarna) 24:48:03
- 4 Paul Bolton (KTM) 25:00:10
- 5 Wade Young (KTM) 25:10:39
- 6 Andreas Lettenbichler (KTM) 25:44:50
- 7 Philipp Scholz (KTM) 26:02:37
- 8 Blake Gutzeit (Husqvarna) 26:26:59
- 9 Lars Enockl (KTM) 26:39:38
- 10 Brett Swanepoel (Yamaha) 26:44:01...

## Silver Class

- 1 Kevin Archer 21:24:08, 2 Jozsa Norbert Levente 21:31:43, 3 Dougy Herbert 21:47:34...
- 25 Gavin Johnston 28:13:12... 36 Andrew Frost 34:10:51, 37 Harvey Dark 34:21:52...

## Bronze Class

- 1 Tomer Shemesh 14:53:50,
- 2 Sven Heidemann 15:03:12, 3 Ziv Karmi 15:09:27... 8 Chris Green 16:37:59...
- 11 Lennie Tidd 16:45:53... 16 Brian Till 17:04:18... 26 Mark Kirby 17:31:41... 44 Darren Blagg 18:15:25... 45 Joseph Till 18:19:27...
- 48 Richard Bentham 18:31:30

## Iron Class

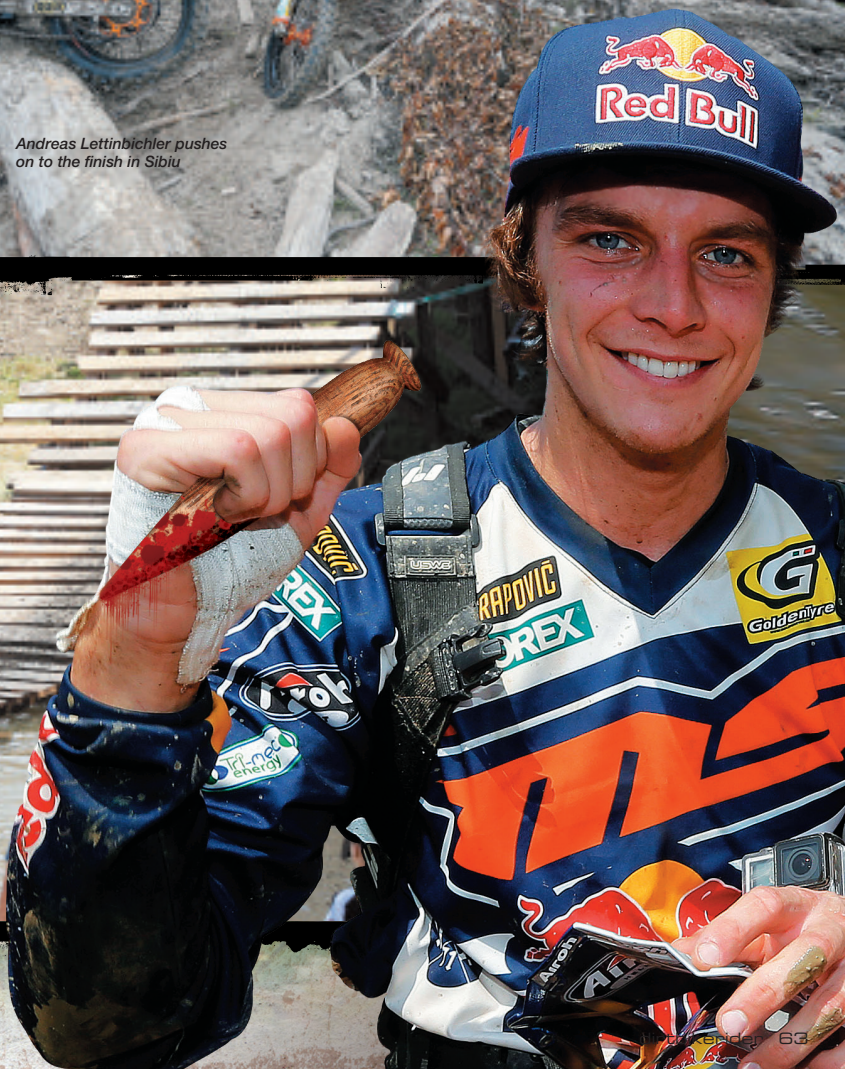
- 1 Jamie Martinez 12:40:58, 2 Thomas Krawietz 13:16:22, 3 Sergio Castello 13:41:40...
- 5 Julian Rylance 13:46:02... 14 James Poulter 15:30:36... 18 Daniel Dicker 15:47:23...
- 21 James Munden 16:22:46... 23 Alistair Ginley 16:27:42... 25 Brendan Simpson 17:25:35...
- 27 Paul McKie 17:49:17... 28 Andy Steward 17:51:50... 30 Robert Montrose 18:18:31...
- 32 Steve Masse 19:20:37... 39 Richard Mills 20:37:15... 43 Stephen Leaming 22:03:16...
- 44 Neil Dutton 22:29:42... 50 Mark Hollingsworth 24:56:14...



Alfredo Gomez battles to a third place finish



Andreas Lettenbichler pushes on to the finish in Sibiu







THE

# BARON!

JOHN BANKS NOT ONLY HAS THE COOLEST NICKNAME IN BRITISH MOTOCROSS BUT HE'S ALSO ONE OF THE TRUE LEGENDS OF THE SCRAMBLING ERA...

Words by Andy Westlake

**B**ack in the days of the cold war, motorcycle enthusiasts behind the iron curtain had little opportunity to witness international off road sport so it's not surprising that on a hot summer's day in 1969 a crowd estimated at over 125,000 gathered for the Soviet round of the world 500cc motocross championship.

The location was on the hillsides near the town of Kishinev in south west Russia and as there were few privately owned cars on the road most of the spectators arrived with their chairs and makeshift 'grandstands' jam-packed into hundreds of old lorries, all eager to see the pick of the worlds best scrambles stars in action.

With dust billowing and the crackle of open exhausts filling the air they witnessed some great racing but at the end of a long hard day they boarded their buses and departed with few having any idea of who had actually won. The race organisers didn't seem to be too keen to announce that a 'foreigner' had beaten the best of eastern Europe and by the time the delayed

presentation took place the bulk of the crowd were gone with only a handful witnessed works BSA man John Banks step forward to collect the winners garlands.

With the season past the half way stage the rider from Bury St Edmonds was now leading the championship table and there was plenty of optimism that if the bike remained reliable and he could maintain his impressive run of form the BSA man could win that elusive world crown. The previous year he had been beaten to the title by a single point by East German Paul Friedrichs.

For the best part of 20 years Banks raced all across the world on a variety of works Dots, BSAs, Chenneys, CCMs and Hondas but it all started on a winters day in 1960 with a Greeves trials bike. He was only a lad of 16 but he'd already earned the nickname of 'The Baron'; one which would be featured in numerous headlines over the years.

"When I was a kid my dad was a builder and because we lived in a big house all my school friends thought we were well off so one day

someone called me 'The Baron' and it stuck throughout my racing career. When I left school I went to building college to learn the basics and then became a plumber working for my dad Monty – he owned several motorbikes but unlike his namesake didn't ride in trials or scrambles and my first insight into competition came when I was aged about 15 and met Mary.

"Mary's brother Roger Dutton was quite a handy scrambler – in fact he won the Eastern centre championships one year – and we used to go along to watch him race and cheer him on. Around the same time I also first met and became friends with Doug Theobald who was starting to make his mark in local trials so bitten by the competition bug I decided that as soon as I was old enough I would have a go myself.

"My fist bike was a Greeves Scottish which I bought from Dave Bickers and I used to take it along to the building sites where we were working and in the lunch times and evenings put in endless hours of practice riding up and down muddy slopes. Just after my 16th birthday in 1960 Doug took me and the bike in





his van to my first trial in Essex and I amazed myself by winning the novice award – better still two weeks later we rode in a local Bury St Edmunds event in which I beat Doug and won the premier award. The funny thing was that although I continued to ride for many years in trials it was the only event I ever won!”

With his appetite whetted it wasn't long before John was lining up in his first scramble – a memorable day in which he departed from home as a junior and returned in the evening as an expert.

“I was desperate to start scrambling so thanks to dad I got a new 250cc Greeves which as I was still only 16 and unable to drive a car my brother in law Trevor transported in his pick-up. It was a local event – I can't remember the exact location now – but at the end of my first junior race I can vividly recall the joy of seeing the chequered flag and realising I was the winner. It was fantastic to win but in those days if you won a junior race you instantly got upgraded to an expert which meant the rest of that season was a pretty steep learning curve.”

Along with Trevor – who doubled as race transport and mechanic – John started to broaden his racing horizons and during that 1961 season there were numerous 250cc wins on the Greeves. With his full-on never say die riding style people started talking about the talented young Banks as a future champion and there was little surprise when Bernard Scott-Wade invited him to start his second full season on the works Dot.

“It was a great honour to be asked to ride a works machine and they supplied me with a couple of scramblers plus a trials bike to keep me in trim during the winter. Bernard Scott-Wade and his son Michael were very good to me but as I soon discovered there was little in the way of any money and although the Dots handled well on rough circuits they didn't have the speed of the Greeves and when ridden hard they regularly broke down.

“That said I managed to get a few good results and thanks to Doug Theobald I managed to get some additional sponsorship which allowed me to do a few of the 250cc world championship rounds. I recall that for my first race I went with fellow Dot rider John Griffiths with the bikes towed on a trailer behind my mum's Vauxhall Victor car. The journey through France was horrendous as with the additional weight of the bikes it wouldn't pull uphill and going down anything more than a minor slope the brakes didn't work. I recall one particular incident when we couldn't stop in time and had to dodge in and out of a petrol station to miss a large vehicle coming the other way.”

Getting to and from that first motocross GP in Spain was a hair-raising experience but on the track the Dot decided to behave and John was soon mixing it with the best quarter-litre racers in the world.

“It might sound a romantic way of life – travelling around Europe racing a motorbike – but it was all done on a shoestring and I had to do all my own mechanical work on the bike. Its favourite trick was to strip gears and I always carried some spares with me but thankfully in the Spanish GP it ran faultlessly and I managed to bring it home in ninth place which was very satisfying.

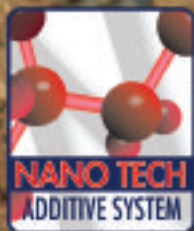
“Later on that season I managed to get some start money from the F.I.M and also had my best result when I managed to finish third in the Swiss GP – as you can imagine Bernard Scott-Wade was delighted. Over the years the Dot factory had spent little money developing or improving the engine and all of us works supported riders were left pretty much to our own devices to find ways of improving them. We tried all sorts of things but the main problem was with the Villiers engine which of course >>





**Steven Clarke**  
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Taking on the Scott Trial on a Dot in 1962

was never designed to cope with the rigours of motocross.

"From racing in the GPs and international events we were very much aware of how blisteringly fast and incredibly reliable the Czech CZs were so in an effort to match them we managed to get a few engines and fitted them into the Dot rolling chassis. They showed some promise but for whatever reason they never worked as well in the Dot as they did in a CZ and we eventually gave up on the idea."

During the next three or four seasons John travelled to many international and world championship meetings with his friend and Greeves ace Dave Bickers in his pick-up but by now the Dot was outclassed by the twin port CZ's and at the age of 23 he landed the perfect works ride with BSA.

"Jeff Smith had won two world titles on the BSA in 1964 and '65 so as the bikes had a winning pedigree I didn't need much persuasion when in 1966 their competition manager Brian Martin invited me to join the works team. I was now a professional rider competing in all the British championship races on the B44 Victor and the following year I also raced a 540cc bike in three rounds of the 750cc Coupe Moto Europe.

"My first race was in Austria and I vividly remember the sight and sound of Sten Lundin

as he overtook me on his Lito which was like a tank compared to my BSA. Unlike my days at Dot when I had to do all my own mechanical work all I had to do at BSA was race the bike while my mechanic – sidecar racer Norman Hanks – did a superb job keeping the engines in top fettle.

"The big bore 540 was a great motor but it was hard pushed to deal with its extra ccs and blew up in a big way at the Red Marley hill climb – it went bang and couldn't be used again. I only rode in one 500cc GP that year – the last one of the season after Jeff Smith had broken his arm – and raced the titanium framed bike Jeff had been developing. It was a full 500 and weighed in at an incredibly light 196lbs but in the cut and thrust of racing it was a bit fragile and if the titanium fractured it couldn't be welded like with a conventional steel frame."

John had only raced in a handful of world championships events during the tail end of '67 but his talent was there for all to see and 1968 started in the way he hoped it would continue with a scintillating win in front of the BBC TV cameras on the 499cc Beezer. The costly titanium framed had been discarded and the Banks mount for the new season was the lean, aggressive and extremely functional B50 Victor GP. With its nickel plated frame – which carried the engine oil – magnesium fork sliders

and wheel hubs it weighed in ready to race at 235lbs and with an engine turning out just over 37bhp at 6,000rpm it was a machine capable of taking on and beating the world.

"In fact the BSA new-boy only had to wait until the French GP in July to notch up his first win when after finishing second to Roger De Coster in the first leg he went one better in the second when he brought the booming BSA home first ahead of Bengt Aberg on his 420cc Husqvarna for overall victory. With his world championship victory duck now broken Banks was now on a roll and the following week he won both legs of the Dutch GP followed by a second overall in the Belgian round to put him in the championship lead.

Throughout that memorable season John had Paul Friedrichs snapping at his heels and despite another second overall in Luxemburg – which maintained his lead – Friedrichs was only six points behind as they lined up for the final round in Switzerland. Second place in both races saw the CZ rider the overall winner and his total points score gave him the world championship by one mark over the unlucky Banks – so near and yet so far?

To miss a world championship by a solitary mark was a bitter pill to swallow but there was some recompense for John as at home the combination of Banks and the BSA was



John in his last GP on the works BSA at a muddy Farleigh in July 1971



almost unbeatable and he ran away with the 500cc British title that year. Optimistic that he could go one better the big man from Bury St Edmonds started the 1969 season with an impressive win in the Hants GN but as he recalled as the season progressed it was an almost exact reflection of the previous one.

"There was some good continental opposition for the Hants and I was pleased to beat Geboers and Teuwissen to win the Good Friday classic. In the next months I had some good wins in both the British and world championship races – first overall in the Czechoslovakian round at Prerov and also in the Russian event at Kishinev – and by the time we went to the Belgian round in August I was leading the world again.

"Sadly that was where the rot set in. In the next race in West Germany I had to retire with ignition failure and after I finished third in the first leg in Luxemburg I suffered a puncture in the second and had to pull out. This was very frustrating as you had to finish both legs to win any points so I'd then lost my championship lead and when the ignition failed again in France I could see my chances quickly disappearing.

"In Switzerland I injured my wrist in practice and then suffered another puncture in the race and by then had slipped to third behind Friedrichs. I managed to finish fifth overall in the final round in East Germany and with Friedrichs retiring in the second leg I was back up to second but Bengt Aberg was crowned the new champion."

Although he'd been out of luck in the world rounds Banks once again had the solace of winning his second British title in '69 and in doing so became the fourth BSA man to win the

coveted crown but as he revealed it would his last year of glory on the Small Heath four-stroke.

"The 1970 world championship season opened on April 11 in Switzerland but for me it was a disaster. In the second leg I was holding a decent fourth when I fell and broke my little finger and although I was fit to ride in the next round in Holland I then dislocated my knee twice in the space of five weeks and had to have an operation for torn ligaments which put me out for the rest of the season."

However it wasn't all gloom and doom in 1970 as over in America motocross was starting to really take off and promoter Edison Dye arranged for a group of world championship riders to take part in the new Trans Am race series. These included John and his BSA team-mates Dave Nicoll, Keith Hickman and Jeff Smith who all put on a super show for the huge stateside audience. Riding a mixture of 250 and 500cc bikes the eight round series ended in a BSA one, two three with Nicoll, Banks and Smith heading the leader board but as John told me this was just a lull before the storm which broke in the summer of 1971.

"The season started okay for us when I won a televised international from my team mate Dave Nicoll at Dodington Park near Bristol but it was obvious that things weren't good with the parent company when we started going to the GPs with a shortage of spares and things missing from the bikes. I managed to finish eighth overall in Italy, got a third in Sweden and was third overall at Farleigh in the British GP but at the end of the meeting we were told by a glum faced Brian Martin that the competition department was to close down and it was our

last day as BSA works riders."

Overnight the works BSA riders were out of a job and although they were offered the continued use of their works Victors – with a degree of spares back up at their own expense until the season's end – only Dave Nicoll availed himself of this and John rode the rest of the season on a 420cc Husqvarna. Although he had spent much of his racing life on big four strokes he took to the Husky like a duck to water and at the end of the '71 season was once again crowned 500cc British champion.

He also returned to the states where he raced a CZ alongside Dave Bickers and Chris Horsfield and again finished runner up in the Trans Am series but away from the race tracks he had opened a busy motorcycle shop in his home town of Bury St Edmonds which proved to be a useful distraction while he pondered his motocross options.

"I'd started the bike shop in 1968 in premises my dad had previously used as a petrol station but by 1971 we had taken on the Honda agency and moved to a purpose built car and bike showroom just down the road. In the GPs the big BSA had been very much the lone four-stroke but on its day it was still competitive so after meeting with Eric Cheney I decided to race his B50-engined bike in the 500cc championship races.

"I also took up the offer from the Ossa importer to race one of their 250s but the way I was 'signed' to ride for Eric was quite bizarre. He had asked me if I was 'interested in riding for him next year' and we arranged to meet in his local pub to discuss it. I told him that I couldn't do it for nothing and with that he got a large biscuit tin out of his bag and presented





John on the Cheney BSA leads Vic Eastwood at a dusty Leighton in July 1973

Torsten Hallman (33) leads John (41) at the 1969 MX des Nations



it to me. I opened it and discovered it was full of money – I think it had been stored under his bed and it was my ‘signing on’ fee for the year.

“Eric was a great engineer and made some good bikes which both went and handled extremely well so I was optimistic that I could fulfil his dream of winning a 500cc GP. During the next couple of seasons I had some good rides and almost managed it in 1973 when I split the two works Suzukis of De Coster and Wolsink and finished second at Carlsbad in America. Sadly despite my best efforts by then the two-strokes ruled the roost and we never did get that elusive win.”

Although the Cheney was outstripped by the lighter and faster two strokes in the GPs with Banks in the saddle it was still extremely competitive in the home championship and in 1973 John scooped his fourth 500cc title – the last time it would be won by a British four-stroke.

By now BSA had slipped into the abyss but there was still plenty of motocross life left in the B50 based single and after two eventful seasons on the Cheney he swapped camps to line up with his former BSA team-mates Vic Allan and Vic Eastwood on one of Alan Clews’ very potent CCMs.

1976 was an extremely productive season for the works CCM team with Allan second, Banks fourth and Eastwood a strong fifth in the British championship and there were also some memorable top five finishes in the GPs. Certainly anyone who witnessed those races can still vividly recall the blood stirring sight and sound of the three factory stars on their big bangers as they fought to keep the hoards of

two-strokes at bay.

Throughout his career John was known as a hard and determined rider with an aggressive ‘sitting’ – as opposed to a standing – racing stance which inevitably gave his bikes a thorough pounding and the sight of the welding gear tending to a fractured frame tube, footrest or broken seat between races was a fairly common one on his works CCM during 1976 and ’77 seasons.

He loved the long stroke 580cc which was ideally suited to his low revving riding style but he was also still able to turn in some stunning rides on the short stroke 500 including fourth place at the Canadian GP and an inspired one at the British round at Farleigh Castle where he finished runner-up – a great performance on the sweet handling CCM.

During the winter of 1978/79 the welding gear was out again but it was not to repair a broken frame but to manufacture a new one which carried the name of ‘Merlin’.

“I was now selling both Honda bikes and cars through our shop so I asked if they could supply me with one of the engines that were being used successfully for desert racing and motocross in America. They duly came up with a 350 assembled by Mugen – a Japanese company formed in 1973 by Masao Kimura and Hirotoishi Honda, the son of Honda motor company founder Soichiro – which we housed in a frame of my own design made by Merlin, a local company who normally produced single seater racing cars.”

John’s first race outing was in front of the TV cameras in an icy wintertime meeting near Southend – ideal conditions for the Honda

engined Merlin which held a strong field at bay for an impressive debut win. Despite some initial problems with the gearbox – solved with some specially made Quaife gears – the new bike which was now a full blown 500 proved to be extremely competitive and this prompted the manufacture of 25 CCM-framed JBR 500s which were sold through his dealership John Banks Racing during the summer of 1979.

The John Banks replicas would be a lasting and fitting reminder of the big man on his booming four strokes but as the new decade dawned he finally decided to call it a day and his retirement brought the curtain down on 20 fantastic years of racing.

Works rider, four-times British 500cc champion, four BBC Grandstand trophy titles, two World of Sport championships, East Anglian sports personality of the year and twice runner-up in the world – not a bad record for the popular man from Bury St Edmunds.

“Obviously there was the disappointment of the punctures and ignition problems which meant I lost the world championship by one point but that aside I had a great career in which I rode some fantastic bikes. We went to places like Russia which I would never have gone to and also made many good friends along the way. It was tough travelling around Europe with two bikes and a pair of spare wheels for five weeks on the trot but it was a wonderful life and one I wouldn’t have changed for the world.”

John Banks – without doubt one of the greatest scramblers of his generation.



# OUT

## OF THE SHARK

THE MAN BEHIND HUSQVARNA'S REVIVED  
RACING PROGRAMME - ROBERT JONAS

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by Ray Archer









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Just in case you hadn't noticed a white bike won the opening Grand Prix of the year and held the red plate at the head of a weirdly unpredictable MXGP championship for five rounds. In just its second season of regeneration Husqvarna has lurched into a number of racing disciplines with the same potency, aggression and potential as its orange sister brand.

The machinery shares a common platform – as with a number of car manufacturers – but the vital ingredient behind the Husqvarna movement is the same management that propelled KTM to be such a super-force in all racing disciplines.

Back in 2006 KTM were jacking-in their costly 125 and 250cc MotoGP programme, their U.S.

racing structure was laughable and motocross was fragmented with an outsourced MX2 team and a 'super' investment in MX1 of Mickael Pichon and Sebastien Tortelli helmed by the divisive late Georges Jobe that would ultimately fail.

Former Austrian motocross champion Robert Jonas had just joined new racing boss Pit Beirer and the two began to plot an overhaul that helped the company rise to the heights still achieved in the worlds of enduro and rally. Beirer has rightly claimed much credit for the resurgence of KTM – post-financial crisis – up to the point where they unleashed formidable 2016 production 250 and 450SX-F motorcycles and picked up the last major crown (AMA

450SX) missing from a stable of titles and championships that numbered eight in 2014 alone and has now reach a startling 251 in all classes. Not bad for a manufacturer that used to have a reputation for engines that could barely last to the chequered flag.

At the start of 2014 Beirer 'lost' his colleague, sound-board and right hand man who is now charged with leading Husqvarna to on-track glory? We sat down with the 40 year old to figure out just how Jonas made the transition from racer to racing manager and his part in the KTM monolith that just continues to steamroll forward, even to the point where Beirer is joking about retirement such is the depth of achievement. >>



Max Nagl held the red plate for much of the MXGP series until injury sidelined him



Jonas, Romain Febvre and Jacky Martens celebrate the Frenchman's GP win in Mexico last year



Jason Anderson leads the US arm of the Husqvarna Racing empire





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"Robert is one of those guys that when he says something then he does it," opines the German former 250cc GP winner. "He does not promise things that he cannot deliver. He is 100 per cent reliable and that is one of his big strengths. He was never the 'showman' and he was never selling himself to people. He worked his way up the hard way but everyone who worked with him found a reliable person."

Jonas, friendly, talkative – although a little shy – and clearly just a little obsessed with racing, may now wear the white-and-blue in line with his fresh job description but his roots lie deep at Mattighofen. It is from the central racing HQ (actually just down the road from the KTM and Husky assembly lines, in Munderfing) that Jonas has allocated resources to the likes of the Rockstar team in the USA (SX podiums with Anderson and Osborne), IceOne so effectively in MXGP and Jacky Martens in MX2 (Febvre winning in Brazil last year and Tonkov taking a moto success with the new FC250 in Italy) and arming the likes of Jarvis and co in off-road and Enduro and made his stamp already. It all began with a different colour though.

"I had the chance to come into an Austrian supported team in 1992 for the national series and that is when I came into contact with KTM and started riding KTMs. It is quite a long time ago and since then I've always been connected to KTM," he explains. "I was in technical school and in 1995 I started working at KTM in the R&D department for two-strokes."

"I come from another part of Austria but moved to Mattighofen. You cannot compare KTM now to what it was then. The target was that I'd be responsible for KTM's two-stroke development department and I had to build up experience. The problem was that I was young and very focussed on motocross riding and racing. I was doing three classes in the Austrian

championship and had five bikes to maintain! I had no mechanic and was there alone in Mattighofen, so it was a busy programme.

"After a year I was exhausted and recognised that if I want to continue I needed a better solution. I found room to combine the job with some testing which allowed me to go riding during the week but to run a technical department then there really is no room for compromise – it is full-time and it forced me into a decision. I chose to try racing."

"I still did some testing with KTM and got a smaller job at a dealership," he goes on. "In 1998 I won my first Austrian championship in the 125cc class and became Red Bull supported and my career was going in the right direction. In '99 I won my second championship and got the chance from KTM to enter the 125 factory team with Jamie Dobb as a team-mate and it was a really cool time."

"It was an awesome opportunity but you could say I was already quite 'old' at 25 and I had missed a lot because of the schooling. Before the first GP I broke my ACL and could not make the best of my chance. I did not get a second one which was understandable. I had a couple more years at Austrian level until 2004 when I had an accident and broke my spine. It took me nearly a year to recover from that. I was 30 then and a father and many things in my life changed."

Jonas headed back to KTM where his years in competition – like Beirer – offered a distinct advantage when it came to the blossoming managerial side of his professional career. Perhaps there's no other motorcycle manufacturer with the racing acumen of Beirer and Jonas when it comes to calling shots on what it takes to become a success.

"I think what we experienced in racing helps a lot," he confirms. "You have to understand

the riders, the mechanics, the girlfriends of the riders and everything around racing to make a good job. I know what it means when a mechanic complains that he has too much work. I would say life has changed a lot in the paddock now at the highest level and it was harder in the old days. I know how it is to work on your own bikes."

Road racing was a new story for Jonas though. It was also at a time when KTM were nearing half a decade of their two-stroke Grand Prix outfit and was not as co-ordinated or organised as it is today. "I got another job opportunity at KTM in the road racing department at that time," recalls Jonas. "So I jumped on that in 2005. It was a big change from being a professional motocross racer and determining your own schedule to full-time employment. It took time but I came to enjoy being part of that set-up."

"The department was led by Harald Bartol and we were building replica factory bikes for other teams. It was fragmented. Everything was designed for the factory riders but by external people. We'd go from one GP to another and nothing was in the factory. We tried to centralise everything. To centralise the technical side of the factory bike so that we could make more of them."

Pre-financial cuts and restructuring, KTM was 'another company'. The firm, under control of the Pierer Group, then refocused towards the end of the decade and started to explode with different models, more street bikes and a very proactive approach to offering the rider more choice.

"When I was there the first time all the schematic drawings were in 2D and printed. Changes were done by hand...it was a completely different time," recalls Jonas. "I cannot remember how many people were in >>

*As a former factory racer himself Jonas has plenty of experience to rely on...*







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the R&D department but it is a small percentage of what there is today – maybe 40? It was a really small group.

“Testing also, there was such a small effort and now there is proper testing departments testing every week and every day. This did not exist back in my first stint. In 2005 the road racing project was something completely new for me. It was a different world, also how the group was made. I liked it but it was tough to understand that way of working. I was happy when Pit took me out of it and back into the off-road side between 2006/2007.

“It was the time when we had Georges Jobe around leading the motocross team and we tried to set-up a proper structure but it was very difficult that year. I was involved in many different things. Even working on the bike and trying to get it lighter, this was also part of my duties. I was excited to then move more into a managerial role and I realised this was a great opportunity for me. I liked to work with Pit from the first moment. We speak the same ‘language’.”

“He was in a different department and he struggled there and that was the moment when I asked to get him into our department and working close to me,” Beirer remembers. “That was the beginning many years ago and together we have built what is now KTM and Husqvarna racing together so I think we are a great team.”

The pair flew to the U.S. to assess the American set-up and the planned to pull everything down. They also spent hours in conversation and discussion as to how to resurrect KTM’s name and forge a wide-spanning racing system. It was a decisive period for a brand that regularly wheels out the ‘Ready to Race’ slogan, counts on a healthy relationship with Red Bull and the counsel of Heinz Kinigadner and re-invests a significant amount of their turnover back on to the track (now, after 2014, more than 864 million euros thanks to sales of almost 160,000 bikes and a staff roster increase to more than 2000).

The positive working relationship between Jonas and Beirer was at the heart of several milestone decisions and strategies that helped KTM click up a few notches in the gearbox. “Pit is a straight and direct guy and can be easy and not so easy at times,” says Jonas. “But if there is a direction set then it is set – he is not jumping from left to right.

“Sure there were moments when we had debates and we still do. I think we gave high value to each other’s opinion but over the years I realised that he has some really strong qualities and thanks to him KTM is where it is right now. He made some good moves and some good decisions like getting Stefan [Everts, brought in as MX manager in 2006] or for Roger [De Coster to remould the American division]. Very seldom he is wrong.

“It is just about the right direction,” he adds. “First we built the team and the motorcycle to have the base ready and then we moved on. Getting Stefan in meant we could create a bike with him [the 350SX-F] and have him as part of the development. We had the bike and the team and then we could get Tony [Cairol]. In the U.S. we got Roger, formed the team and brought Dungey into it. The procedure seems logical but you have to have it in mind before you do it and make sure you make it happen.”

“I hope he didn’t say any bad things about me and now I’m sitting here saying only good things about him,” joked Beirer in a separate interview. “I’m different to him but I think together we are a very strong combination. There have been many involved in the whole set-up but on the difficult days it was me and him sitting down and working out the strategy and the next step.



Aleksandr Tonkov was Husqvarna’s leading MX2 rider in 2015. He’s rumoured to be replaced by Max Anstie next season



I would say the Godfather of the story is Kini and I would not want to forget him if I name Robert. In that circle we discuss things.”

“Pit is the guy in the first row and giving the directions and I have been the guy in the background,” Jonas claims. “If things go right and we get the results then I feel partly responsible for that. It is good what we are allowed to do. You almost need to compare the job to a hobby, every single day you can enjoy it. It is an outstanding exciting opportunity that has been given to us by Mr Pierer. We both built that factory racing programme.”

And now the story has moved on.

“Mr Pierer gave the order to build the Husqvarna racing programme and it was a new



challenge,” Jonas tells. “Due to the separation that had to happen between the brands there came a time for a person to head the programme and it couldn’t really be one guy in charge of both. We found quite quickly that to divide the work was the best way but still do our jobs pretty much as before.

“We are still doing many things together and I would say that he is the face for KTM while I’m the one for Husqvarna motorsports. If we would have chosen a different way and Husqvarna would have brought in a different guy to lead that programme it would have ended in a competition from the top down and I know what it means to be a competitor against Pit!

“It is normally a thing in which you cannot >>



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Jonas spearheaded KTM's early road race efforts – a project which Husqvarna has benefitted from too



be successful. We can handle the competition between us. In fact I had two conditions before I took on the new role. One, that we wouldn't go up against each other – so we would always agree on what the other one does – and two, I did not want to lose the opportunity to work in some way with Roger because I enjoyed so much what we built up over there. We did not have a Husqvarna team in the U.S. and we formed that quite quickly."

The Husqvarna migration was swift. Since the press conference at the 2013 Swedish MXGP bricks were rapidly put into place and soon that recognisable logo was a prominent part of the motocross paddock, in Enduro also and had sprung up into MotoGP. Where was the priority for the brand on the track? "Moto3 was for pure brand awareness and advertising," Jonas

says. "The focus is definitely on motocross and enduro and off-road in general. We just try to make the best possible results that we can and of course it does bring us into competition with KTM and it can get complicated. The situation in MXGP for example has been tricky but we have to keep it fair and provide the best possible support to each rider."

The brands might share a lot and with Jonas and Beirer still in tandem and with a form of gentleman's agreement in place, the division between the companies is very much an aesthetic one; for now. "It is always difficult to see [what will happen]," says Jonas. "There might be new ideas or concepts and it is up to the board what they'd like to do with the brand in terms of more separation. If you develop a bike with one group then you try to make the

best possible bike that you can. If you then have to go about making it different then it means you have to compromise and who wants the second-best motorcycle? I think the way we do it right now is pretty good. We get a great 'present' from KTM in that the bike is great. Immediately from day one we were competitive. We cannot forget that. We will still share the resources because it makes sense. Husqvarna is its own brand but technical-wise it nice to be on a similar level."

We decide to throw a tough question at the Austrian: if Dungey is fighting Anderson for a Main Event supercross win who do you want to win? "It is quite clear that I want Anderson! If KTM is winning then I am super-happy but if Husqvarna is winning then I am even happier. I'm sure that Pit is also happy with what was >>>





happening in MXGP with Max [Nag] doing so well in the championship and Tony [Cairol] right behind."

KTM might be the lords of off-road and are gaining sizeable clout in MotoGP as well as producing some serious street products but Husqvarna is arguably the more renowned and prestigious name. We never saw Steve McQueen riding an orange bike. Jonas is quite aware of the responsibility he has in controlling the white chess pieces on the racing 'board'.

"Thinking about Husqvarna and the job to be done then it is quite emotional," he says. "It is such a well-known brand, especially in America, and it is a big honour to be able to be in that position. I feel the pressure of course because when I watch the races then

I am frickin' nervous – it's like I am out there riding! I remember having the official team announcement in the U.S. and having to speak in front of all those famous faces and say that Husky would be back in supercross and motocross with an official team – I was really nervous."

Robert might have to deal with more nerves being back in front of the motorsport press. 2015 is only the second term for Husqvarna and seeing how his work with Beirer hammered KTM to the front of races everywhere then there is scary potential for the marque. "I got a bit used to those things when I was racing but it is a new part of this job because I have been working for many years in the background. Now making this little step forward is difficult!"

Beirer is full of praise for how Jonas has branched out. "He worked hard for the respect he has now from the industry and all our partners, team and satellite teams. The KTM show is massive – our enduro, rally, motocross, U.S. Supercross and he is a big part of that."

"I have built a lot of experience working at Pit's side and just being in paddocks year-on-year then you keep learning," reveals Jonas. "We don't have incredible or endless budgets. You have to make the best of a certain number and sometimes you don't have the solution immediately. I get some sleepless nights sometimes but not very often."

Towards the end of our talk it is obvious that Jonas (and Beirer) have big schemes for their racing efforts which they have essentially





doubled since they marshalled the KTM wing together. It is interesting to think how they will cope when KTM riders and Husqvarna athletes get into the heat of battle although it is a situation that is bound to take place behind doors at Munderfing.

For Jonas there is one burning ambition on the horizon – a position in which KTM have sat each season since 2010. “It would have been amazing if Max could have won the MXGP title in our second year of factory racing,” he enthuses. “What he has achieved already with the wins and those red plates... I’m so thankful. I have the red plate from Qatar in my office and every day I see it and enjoy it. The MXGP title would be the biggest thing. If we can win that then we’ll have a serious party for sure.”



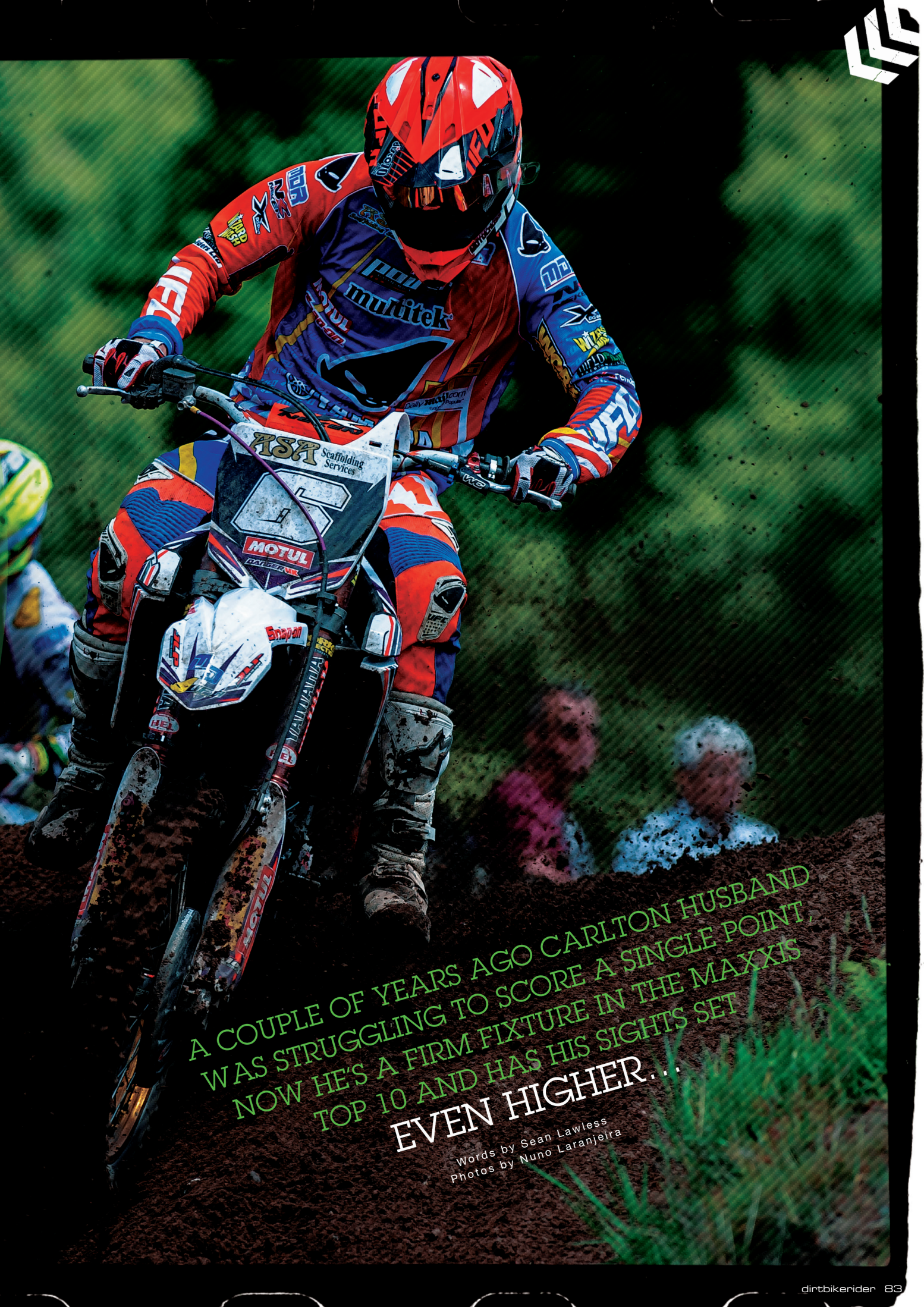


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## CARLTON WHO?

No disrespect to the North Easterner but Carlton Husband has pretty much come out of nowhere over the last couple of years. Just a handful of seasons ago he was wringing the nuts off a two-smoker at the Red Bull Pro Nationals, now he's comfortably running top 10 in MX2 in the Maxxis series.

I'm not for one minute suggesting that the guys racing the two-stroke classes in the RBPns weren't quick – they hauled – but the step up to the full British championship is a massive one. And the man from Sunderland has taken it in his stride.

Currently sitting in eighth in the domestic MX2 series after a bit of a nightmare at round

six at Foxhill (which he pretty much predicted but we'll come back to that later), Carlton's progression in just his second full season of British championship racing has been every bit as rapid as his MBO Power ASA Yamaha.

It's what you'd expect from a highly-hyped 17-year-old schoolboy champ moving into the adult ranks, not a 23-year-old who works part-time in a garage and up until a year ago was a relative unknown. But these days he's got two-time British champion Brad Anderson as a team-mate, pits out of one of the most professional awnings in the paddock and is fast establishing a reputation as being a

rider to watch.

But before we start speculating

on where he's heading, let's find out a little bit more about where he's come from...

"I started riding when I was in Year Five at school," he says. "A neighbour had a bike and that's what got me into it on a PeeWee 80. Then I got a KX65 but I wasn't very good on it. I did all right in the local stuff with thirds and seconds and I think I won a couple of championships near me on an 85cc but nothing serious."

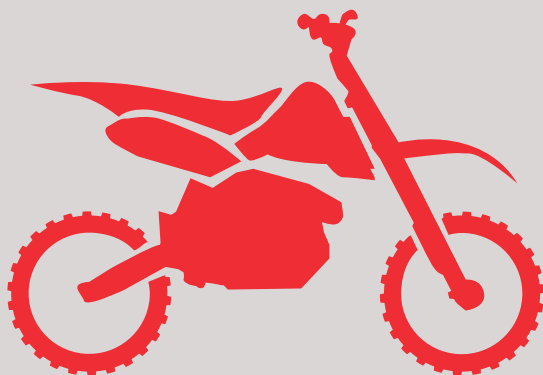
A decision to head west into Cumbria to try different tracks and surfaces began to pay off and Carlton soon found he was picking up the pace.

"I started getting better when we began going to Cumbria meetings because instead of riding the same tracks locally I started riding sand and then I did a few training days over in Holland. It was about riding different surfaces >>>





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to what I was used to. I kept doing it and doing it and doing it and I just got better like that, from riding different tracks. I also did a few nationals – the BYMX and stuff like that – but I was right at the back.”

By the time he was in his mid-teens he was racing a 250F but that all changed when he picked up a personal sponsor who steered him back into the world of two-stroke racing.

“I switched back to two-strokes because I got a sponsor and that’s what they wanted me to do. It was through Paul at Moto X World up in Consett [in County Durham]. He put me on to someone called Steve Colmer who owns a big grouse moor. We’d never really had a sponsor before and he had a 350 he gave me for the winter and when it came to the beginning of the next season he got me a 250 two-stroke and it started from there.

“I had so much fun on the two-stroke and that’s when we began to get a bit serious. I was racing with riders like Matt Moffat and Stuart Edmonds – I wasn’t quite at their speed but I wanted to try and do good and started doing the nationals and bigger races.”

Carlton was a front runner in the BYMX adult two-stroke class but it was his heroics on a 125cc machine in the Red Bull Pro Nationals that proved to be the stepping stone.

A strong third in 2011, the following year he

went two places better and while the standard of rider wasn’t necessarily as high as in the Pro MX1 and MX2 divisions the racing was always super-competitive and provided a great shop window for a teenaged Carlton to prove that he could really hang it out.

So for 2013 Carlton got his first taste of Maxxis action, starting off on a 450 JLP Racing Bikesport KTM with – it has to be said – limited success. As series reserve he missed the cut for the points-paying races at the opening round but by round three, even though he got lapped, he picked up a couple of points for a race one 19th.

“I just wasn’t getting on with the 450 at all. I had a few bad crashes and it wasn’t working out. I hurt my shoulder and was about ready to jack it in unless I tried something else.”

He sat out the next two rounds and then reappeared at Hawkstone Park armed with a 250F but failed to make an impression with a 23-21-30 scorecard and at the final round at Farleigh Castle he scored just a single point in the second MX2 race. It was hardly an auspicious start to his first Maxxis campaign but it’s one that makes the way he’s turned things around all the more remarkable.

Sticking with the JLP Racing Bikesport KTM but racing full-time in MX2 in 2014, Carlton qualified 13th at the opening round at

>>



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Landrake and scored solid points at every round, the highlight being a final race ninth at Cusses Gorse. For someone who 10 months earlier had been struggling to get a single point it was a dramatic reversal of fortune that he credits former GP racer Stuart Flockhart for engineering.

"I started spending a lot of time with Stu. He got me feeling good and believing in myself and feeling much more confident and it just got better from there. I also switched from a full-time job to working part-time so I had more time on the bike."

For the final round he raced for Roy Emberson's Yamaha team after fellow North Easterner Anderson provided an introduction and that relationship has been maintained into the 2015 season where Carlton's star has continued to rise.

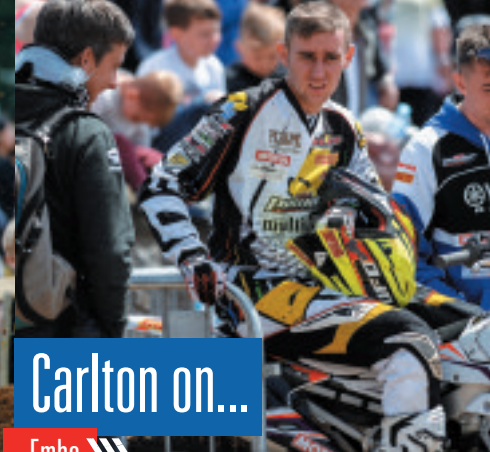
Simple economics dictate that unless a rider is capable of being a championship contender they're going to have to finance their place on any team and bringing his personal sponsor Colmer along obviously helped. But after his

storming start to the 2015 season Carlton's close to justifying his place on the strength of his results alone.

"I'm starting to really get into it now. The bike and everything is just perfect. It's all going good. I'm very surprised at how well I'm doing this year and at the same time I'm not. Over the winter I put so much time and effort in and so did my sponsor. He's put loads of money and time into me. We've worked hard so I'm getting the results I should be getting really. At Blaxhall I wasn't expecting to be sixth though – that was quite a surprise."

Carlton kicked off his 2015 Maxxis campaign with 14th at the chaotic Hilton Park opener. At Lyng he was 13th, followed by ninth at Canada Heights and 10th at Hawkstone Park before posting a career-best finish at Blaxhall.

Unless you come from the North East it's hard to appreciate just how tough it is to put in quality track time during what can be savage winter months and, apart from a few weeks training in Spain, Carlton has to dig deep if he wants to get sufficient saddle time. >>



## Carlton on...

### Embo >>>

"It's really good riding for Roy. A massive experience. But it's totally different. When I was at Bikesport they did help me out and I appreciate that a lot but when it came to race day we – me and my dad and Steve – had to do everything ourselves. Going to the team takes a lot of the pressure off but it also makes you want to work harder again because the team's got a reputation and you want to look good for them. I'm always getting wrong off Roy for not changing my kit and stuff like that!"

"I'm not too used to that but I'm getting used to it and hopefully next year I'd like to be in the same position. I haven't got a deal for next year yet but we're trying to sort something out."

### Ando >>>

"It's good to be on the same team as Brad. Obviously he's been British champion so he's very experienced and professional but we don't really do much practising together or anything, he just does his own thing and gets on with it. If I ever ask him something he will always help me out but I think he likes to get his head down and keep himself to himself."

### Everts >>>

"When I was growing up my hero was Stefan Everts. Watching him in the sand and everywhere else, the way he stands up. I didn't really watch the Americans, it was all the European stuff."

### Supporters >>>

"There's lots of people helping me and I can't thank them enough. James Leigh-Pemberton has been a huge help and, of course, Steve [Colmer] and my family. The guys at the garage, my mate Keith who pit boards for me when I'm practising – there are too many to mention but they know who they are and they know how much their support means to me."







## Behind the scenes

### Carlton's working week >>>

"I work part-time for a garage called Autofix in Washington – they help me out a lot with things like time off to train. I do a bit of running about for them picking up cars and servicing them.

"On a Monday I'll go to work until about 5pm and then I go boxing training for a couple of hours. Tuesday I normally rest and get all my stuff ready for Wednesday when I'll go practising with Stuart Flockhart. I'll either go up to Scotland or he sometimes comes down here. It depends where we are but if it's local I'll come back and do more boxing or circuits at night.

"I also ride with my sponsor's son Ollie. Me and him spend quite a bit of time riding together.

"Thursday I'll normally go for a swim and then rest Friday and get sorted for the weekend."

"The last three years we've been to stay with friends who live in Barcelona for part of the winter so we get a good two or three weeks over there but the rest of the time we've got to travel seven or eight hours right to the top of Scotland to Tain. That's really, really sandy and we're there pretty much every other weekend. All the training I do at Tain has helped a lot in this year's British championship with so many of the tracks being sandy."

When we first spoke it was the week before round six of the Maxxis at Foxhill – see, I said we'd come back to that – and he was pretty frank about how he feels about the former GP circuit.

"I don't go great on hardpack – Foxhill is my worst track in the world to be fair. I just do not enjoy it at all. But I've been trying to get out on the hardpack and I've got a couple of days testing with Steve Payne from Multitek on hardpack so hopefully by the time we get to Foxhill it shouldn't be too bad."

Unfortunately for Carlton he could only manage 17th at Foxhill and slipped a place in the championship but he remains confident that this is just a blip.

"In qualifying I felt all right and was enjoying it and then they put all that water down on top of the polished stuff and I had a big crash down one of the hills and hurt





my shoulder. After that I was riding okay but not where I know I can be and did not enjoy the track one little bit. I couldn't get going.

"I'm not worried though – I'm heading to Belgium to practice so the last two rounds I'm going to come out swinging. I just want to keep working hard and improving. I'd love to be getting top fives all the time – that would be absolutely amazing. I definitely want to keep pushing as hard as I can and then I'll see where it gets me.

"I love motocross, the feeling you get is crazy, it's mad – and the adrenalin you get is just brilliant. I love it."







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## HGS Exhaust system

Last month you may have seen that our friends at Hardcore Racing hooked us up with a VForce 3 reed block for the TC 125. This month those same generous guys gave us a full HGS exhaust system to test!

In conjunction with upping the main jet a couple of sizes from the stock setting, the combo of the reeds and the pipe is awesome. Don't get me wrong the TC 125 is a little ripper out of the box to start with but these bolt-on bits have made a very good bike even better. It is just a little stronger all the way through the range and I can quite honestly say that the TC

125 is my favourite bike to date. It has truly reinvigorated my love for riding dirt bikes and the addition of the bolt-on bits heightens those feelings.

As you will see in the photos, the finish of the HGS does add that 'factory' look which is always an added bonus. You gotta look good to go fast right? You can get more info on these parts at [www.motocrossdirect.co.uk](http://www.motocrossdirect.co.uk).



## Ogio Big Mouth wheeled gear bag

The guys at [www.madison.co.uk](http://www.madison.co.uk) sent us a new OGIO kit bag to check out. As I am sure is the case with most you I have been a fan of OGIO for many years and I've used them extensively on my many travels and adventures. It's a great feeling rolling through the airport with your trick-ass suitcase looking like Mr. Action Sports!

However this new bag will serve as my first fully fledged OGIO kit bag. Firstly I can assure you that it is a quality piece of kit, very hardwearing and oh-so practical for us dirt rats. It's pretty nifty to have something that has been specifically designed to cart your MX gear around in particularly after being accustomed to a sweaty old sports equipment sack!

You can fit in several sets of gear, a neck brace, boots and body armour too. There is also a separate compartment to stash your lid in and keep it in tip top condition. There are also several zip-up pockets, inside and out, that you can use to keep the more fragile and loose items – like goggles and gloves – safe and sound. There's even a pull-out mat to stand on whilst you get changed – I mean you wouldn't want to get



your best moto socks all dirty now would you!

Last but not least there are a sturdy pair of wheels and an extendable handle that makes lugging your stuff around so damn easy. It's a must have for any serious dirt dude!

# FILE!

MAX'S MISSION TO RATE EACH AND EVERY MOTOCROSS PRODUCT ON THE MARKET GATHERS MOMENTUM AS HE TRIES AND TESTS A VERITABLE SMORGASBORD OF NEW BITS AND BOBS...

Words and photos by Max Hind





## 100% Racecraft goggles

Every dirt bike rider's favourite fashion accessory has to be a fresh set of moto spectacles. Yes, they can be a fashion statement but goggles also provide essential protection for the eyes – you only get one set of those – and the rest of the money maker as well as ensuring that you've got the best vision achievable while throwing down motos.

So how do the 100% Racecraft goggles perform under DBR test conditions? Well, the large lens provides a tremendous field of vision – better than anything I have tried. The

goggles also feature a hefty nose guard to keep the old nozzle from getting damaged by rocks and roost. It is worth noting that because of this guard as well as the outriggers the goggles can feel a bit bulky and can be a little awkward to fit into place if your helmet also features some sort of nose guard or protection.

However, you can most definitely feel the quality of the product and you can really perceive that they are a top notch pair of goggles that perform and feels as great as they look.

## Eks Brand Gox goggles

If you are looking to make a statement with your moto eye wear then these are the goggles for you. EKS have an entire range of beautifully stunning and striking goggle designs – we are running with the Fade Phantom in red/white and damn do they look good!

Together with the tinted mirror lens the design really does stand out from the crowd

and you can line up behind the gate knowing that you've already won in the ever so important goggle war.

Aside from looks how well do these beauties perform in other important areas? The Gox goggles are far simpler than some of your other way more expensive brands and they do not feature a nose guard or outriggers meaning that they're certainly not as bulky as other goggles. Therefore there is no awkwardness trying to put these goggles on as you try to fit a bulky nose guard behind your helmets built in nose guard. The downside being that you don't have that extra bit of face protection.

The combination of the four layer face foam to soak up all your sweat and the 'face forming' polyurethane blend frame ensures for a great fit and an extremely comfortable experience while wearing these peeper protectors.



## Leatt GPX 5.5 neck brace, body vest and 3DF elbow pads

I got my hands on a new Leatt GPX 5.5 neck brace to test this month. There has always been, and I guess always will be, people arguing for and against the idea of neck braces. I personally sit firmly on the side of wearing one of these every time I ride. As we all know, motocross is a dangerous game and any piece of kit that is designed to keep me a little safer while on the bike is a very welcome addition to my gear bag arsenal.

The new GPX 5.5 neck brace has come on leaps and bounds since the first Leatt I owned way back in the day. All of the adjustments for size can now be done quickly and easily without having to mess about with tools and the opening mechanism is now a hinge rather than a clip on each side – it's also worth pointing out that there is a quick release on the brace to get it off easily should you need to.

The whole thing sits a little lower to give more freedom and movement which is a huge improvement from the days of yore when neck braces really used to restrict head movement. There are other clever



enhancements such as the adjustable 'Coreflex rear thoracic strut' (aka the back bit) that actually folds up so your brace is easy to store away (in your OGIO bag of course!) They have also changed the material from the early models so the braces are now really easy to clean.

The thing that Leatt are particularly good at is designing their products to work together, the synergy and integration between their products is great. Therefore along with the 5.5 neck brace I also tried out the 5.5 body vest. The cool thing about this is that it is designed to work in conjunction with your brace and can be worn over or under your race shirt.

In comparison to my old Leatt 3DF body armour this thing makes you feel a little like a ninja turtle, it's pretty bulky, especially on the back. It makes the 3DF (which does offer a fair amount of protection) feel like a mere roost guard. However as I have already mentioned I'm all for extra protection so feeling slightly more bulky is a price I'm willing to pay for my safety – besides who doesn't like ninja turtles? Ninja turtles are bad ass!

The 5.5 body vest isn't even the ultimate body protection unit available from Leatt – that title belongs to the 5.5 body protector which is slightly heavier, a little more restrictive and comes complete with sleeves with built in elbow and shoulder protection. So if you are planning on crashing a fair bit then that might be the piece of kit for you!

Back to the 5.5 body vest and it comes with a built in body belt and superb protection around your ribs, chest and back. If you opt to wear the armour over your shirt there are ready made pockets that the front and rear parts of your Leatt neck brace slot into. This means you can ditch the under arm optional straps from your neck brace and have an all in one solution for your body protection.

There is no drama if you don't want to look too much like a goon and wear your shirt over your body armour as the front and rear of the brace will just sit over the shaped pockets rather than slot in them. The only negative of the armour is that it is so damn good – it's CE certified for impact protection – that you could get a bit hot if the temperature shoots up but again that's a price I'm willing to pay.

To finish off this orgy of Leatt goodness I also tried the Leatt Hybrid 3DF elbow pads. These little beauties actually match the design of my neck brace (yes, I am that much of a tart) and are designed not to slip down your arm which can be a problem with elbow pads. I have used the 3DF pads in the past but these are a new design with longer sleeves to further prevent any slippage. They are also made from 'Moisture Cool' fabric whatever the hell that is! Anyway so far so good as these things are the dog's danglies of elbow pads.







## Big Dirt MX Gear

We thought we would give a budget set of MX kit a whirl this month and at the bargain price of £89.99 for shirt, gloves and pants the Big Dirt Destroyer kit fell right into that category. It is a retro style kit that sleek and simple – just the way I like it! My first impressions were how comfortable the stuff was to wear and out on track it does exactly what it's supposed to do. After a trip through the washing machine it still looks like new too. The company is based in the UK so it's always good to give the home boys a bit of support. Check them out at [www.bigdirt.co.uk](http://www.bigdirt.co.uk).



## Redant Motorcycle Cleaner

This is the first of a few Redant products I have to test and yep it does what it says on the tin – or spray bottle anyway. Apparently it's a 'heavy duty advanced foam cleaner and degreaser' and it did do the job on the TC 125 after a hard day motoing at Mildenhall. It even managed to turn the white bits on the seat back to white which I have struggled with previously so thanks for that Mr Redant!

## Elf Unleaded race fuel

I have often smelt that slightly odd odour of race fuel when a top tier rider rips past but I have never used the stuff myself so I jumped at the chance to test some when I had the opportunity recently as part of our mission to bust – or prove – a few moto myths. At £33 a gallon this stuff has got to be good, hasn't it? The empty wallet certainly hopes so.

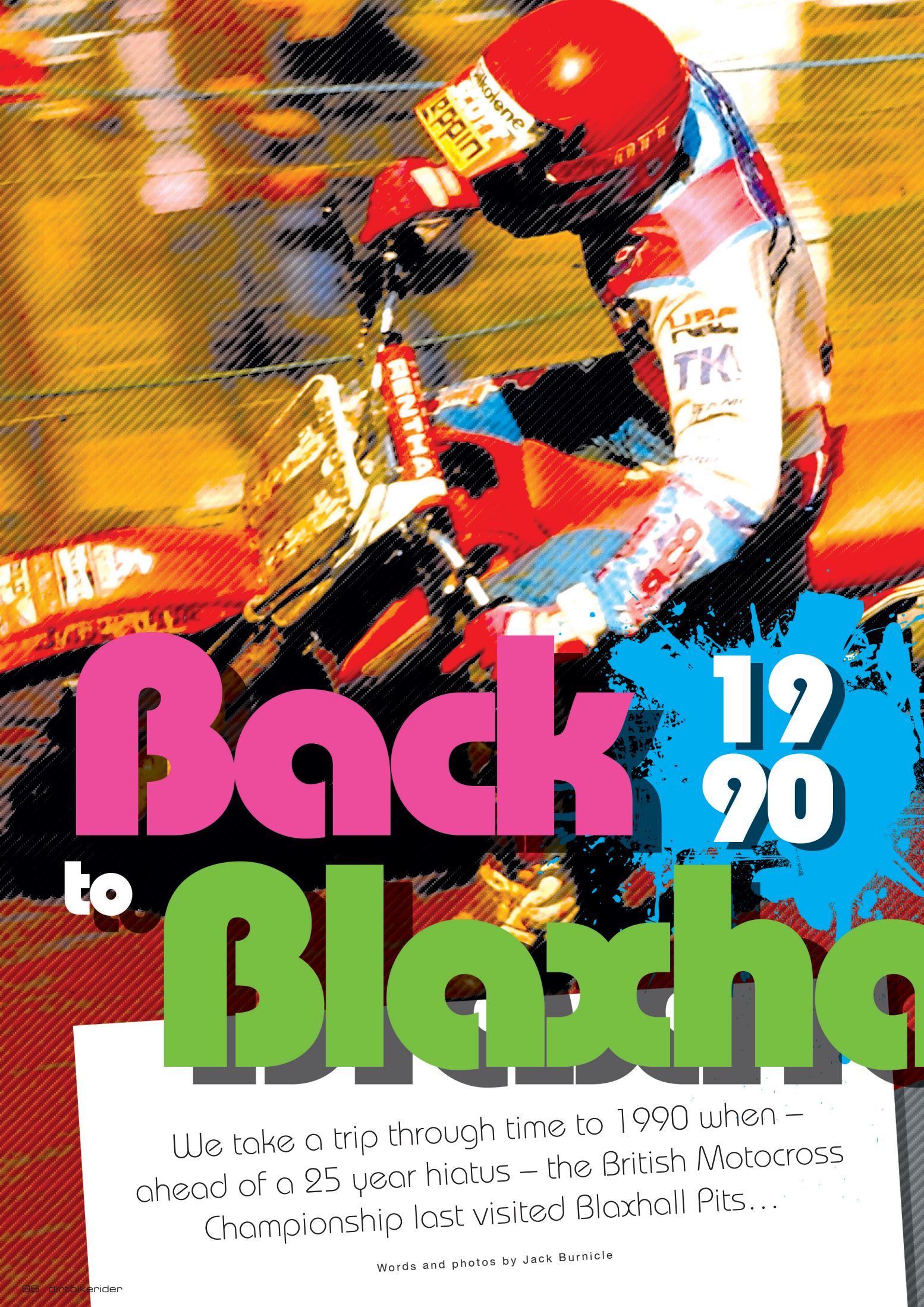
The fuel we tried was Elf unleaded race fuel and well, have you ever seen that episode of Family Guy when Peter Griffin fantasises about what would happen if he put jet fuel into his pick-up truck and he proceeds to start flying around the skies of Quahog? Well something a little like that happened – this stuff turned my little ripper into a god damn rocket ship!

We conducted the test in a very scientific manner. I put down half a moto to empty the tank of the regular fuel before heading to the pit stop to fill her back up with the magic stuff. We did this so that I could really discover the difference that this stuff makes – almost instantly – on the same track under the same conditions.

The end result was truly flabbergasting (and I do not use that word lightly). In the deep corners where the little 125 struggled to pull before, she now rocketed away. It was amazing to instantly feel the difference the race fuel made and a real eye opener for my humble self – I think it's safe to say that the benefits race fuel offer truly is not moto myth but in truth moto fact...







# Back <sup>19</sup><sub>90</sub> to Blaxhalla

We take a trip through time to 1990 when – ahead of a 25 year hiatus – the British Motocross Championship last visited Blaxhall Pits...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle





Suzuki-mounted Andy Nicholls had won the 250 title for Honda in 1988



Typically spirited aggression from West Malling's Mark Eastwood (250 Silkolene Honda Britain)



EBB's uncle Mark 'Burgerman' Banks muscles his 250 Kawasaki in front of Craig Pratley

**T**his year's Maxxis British Championship welcomed back the fine old-school East Anglian track at Blaxhall Pits, near Wickham Market, in Suffolk. 25 years ago the Woodbridge and District Motor Cycle Club hosted a round of the 1990 125 and 250cc National Championships round this rough, sandy circuit set, as its name suggests, in an amphitheatre that favours great spectator viewing.

It was the second round of the two series. The top 10 in each class from the West of England opener were seeded through to a pair of 20 minute plus two lap main events. The rest had to qualify via brisk 10 minute plus one lap

heats! There were 76 250cc entries besides the seeded top 10 split into two heats but with 96 entries (plus the seeded top 10) the 125s required three qualifiers!

This vast array of riders included nine UK national champions, 30 grand prix riders (five of them GP winners!), three Weston Beach Race winners and an uncle and five fathers of present day stars – one future world enduro champion Paul Edmondson! The others were Kristian Whatley's dad Jeremy (Mitsui Yamaha), Nathan and Ben Watson's old man Rob Meek on a Terry Rudd Honda, Cornish boy Josh Gilbert's father Andy, Brad Wheeler's dad Brian and EBB's uncle Mark Banks.

Impressive Ulsterman William Burgess 125 Suzuki) scraps with Warren Edwards (Mitsui Yamaha)

Ulsterman Alan Morrison (Silkolene Honda) narrowly led the 125s by a single point from Heron Suzuki duo Rob Herring and Mark Bennett with Warren Edwards (Mitsui Yamaha), Irishman Philip Neill (Suzuki), Whatley (Mitsui Yamaha), South African Ryan Hunt (Silkolene Honda), Julian Rawson (Mitsui Yamaha), Craig Pratley (Team Green Kawasaki) and Justin Banks (Suzuki) filling the top 10. Reigning champ Herring headed the 250s from former champion Whatley, Pratley and 1989 125 champion Jamie Dobb (Honda), with Bennett fifth, Mark Eastwood (Honda) sixth and Mark Banks (Kawasaki) eighth.

Other big names in action included Andy Nicholls, Dave Watson, Mark Fulton, Paul Malin,

Matt Bates, Russ Jarman, Paul Bickers, Ashley Kane, Karl Prestwood, Matt Gordon, Ulstermen William Burgess, Brian Steele and Paul Chambers, Scotsmen David Campbell and Ali Graham, James Marsh and Richard Main – like Meek an AMCA champion.

By the end of an invigorating day bathed in mellow spring sunshine Herring had taken over leadership of the 125 table ahead of Morrison and Bennett while Dobber had toppled Robbie from 250 top spot. Both men would go on to win those two titles that season, while Alan Morrison would famously become the first Irishman to win a grand prix – the British 125 round at Nantwich...

Reigning 125 champ Jamie Dobb (Honda) took the lead in the 250cc series





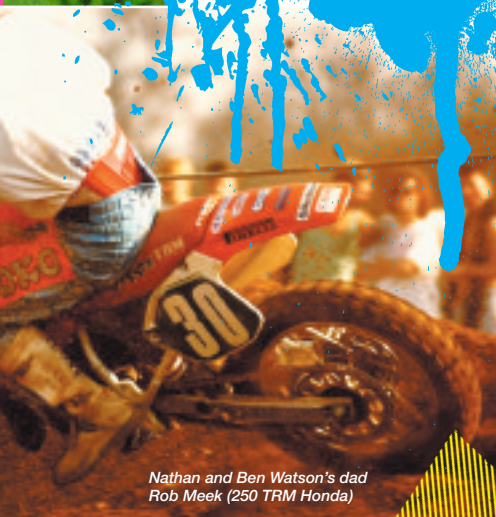
MX des team manager  
Neil Prince, riding for  
Silkolene Honda Britain,  
in spectacular 125 action



Warren Edwards ties  
his 125 Mitsui Yamaha  
in knots



500GP rookie  
Paul Malin launches  
his 250 Kawasaki  
through the valley



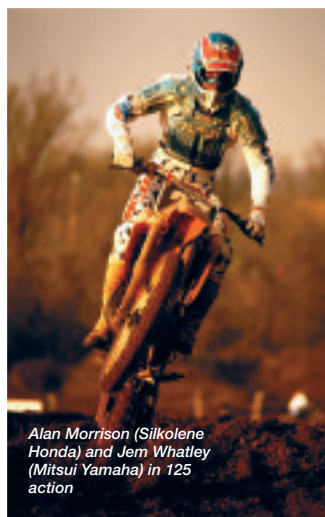
Nathan and Ben Watson's dad  
Rob Meek (250 TRM Honda)



South African Ryan Hunt  
(125 Silkolene Honda)  
leads Warren Edwards  
(Mitsui Yamaha)



Marks and Spencer shirt  
model Matt Bates rode  
a 250 KTM



Alan Morrison (Silkolene  
Honda) and Jem Whatley  
(Mitsui Yamaha) in 125  
action



Newtownard's William  
Burgess (125 Suzuki)  
leads champion elect  
Rob Herring



Oxford stylist Mark Bennett  
(Heron Suzuki) in 250cc  
action



Alan Morrison (Silkolene  
Honda) and Jem Whatley  
(Mitsui Yamaha) in 125  
action



## IT'S A DONNY SHOOTOUT AS FATCAT AND DMP GO HEAD-TO-HEAD...

Since opening its door over a quarter of a century ago Doncaster Moto Parc has evolved and changed significantly over the years. DMP started out life in the early 1990s as a training ground for a young Ed Bradley who at the time was becoming increasingly frustrated with having to journey several hours to tracks in order to train for his burgeoning racing career.

It soon became one of the first fully fledged motocross practice facilities in the area and provided local moto heads with a great track to ride right on their door step. In the 25 years since those early days the motocross practice track industry has changed significantly and DMP has been at the forefront of that movement. The driving force behind DMP is former GP racer Ed Bradley who has always strived to enhance the experience for his customers.

In 2015 DMP is a well organised, cohesive practice and race facility that opens every Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday for practice and hosts local club races on most first and third Sundays of each month.

As you crest the hill onto the raised paddock at DMP you could easily be fooled into thinking that you've stumbled into some sort of moto paradise. With beautiful wooded areas as the back drop and a freshly watered and meticulously prepped track in front of you it's like you've found some sort of top secret Floridian training ground where as in reality you are in an old quarry right next to Robin Hood airport.

From the paddock area you have great views of the entire track or if you wish to get closer to the action you can head through the tunnel to a nice grassy infield area. To say that the viewing at DMP is top notch would be an understatement!

The soil of the track itself is gravel-based sand that can really pack down quite hard. It's a good mix of sand and hardpack and it's not

uncommon to find nice loamy berms, long deep ruts, short sharp square bumps and long wavy rollers. The gravel base does make for some nasty roost however! Nevertheless when the track is prepped and watered just right you'll have no end of fun smashing in some hot laps.

Although there isn't any overly long straights to be found here, DMP does feel like a fast track and you really feel like you can open her up and have some fun, particularly early on when the track is nice and flat! DMP is an all weather track with good drainage meaning that it can handle most things that Mother Nature can throw at it and is open all year round.

One of the great things about DMP is how you can tell that Ed and his team really care about the track and their customers. A lot of thought goes into how things are run and operated. For example Ed ensures that on weekends he splits riders into three groups (kids, novice and expert) and he gives them 20 minutes each – just long enough for his typical customer base to handle.

However if it is particularly busy he will split it into four groups and drop the session times to 15 minutes to ensure that everyone still gets to ride every hour. On Wednesday's DMP typically holds an open session for everyone, that is unless some seriously fast pro riders turn up or even just one kid arrives to ride some laps, in that case Ed will split the riders into two half an hour sessions (kids/adults or novice/expert). This is all done for safety reasons and Ed ensures that safety is paramount – he has a team of marshals that are trained in house as well as very experienced first aiders that have seen it all and are able to deal with whatever is thrown at them.

The DMP team know who their customers are and they like to cater things specifically for those people, which is a very refreshing thing to see.

For example in terms of the tracks difficulty

DMP doesn't feature any obstacles that are all too intimidating for their hobby rider customer base, a few decent sized table tops are thrown into the mix that can act as great confidence boosters for novice riders working on their jumping skills. Yet the track can still become rough and rugged and many of the country's top pro riders choose to come along and put down training motos at DMP.

Perhaps the only negative in regards to DMP is the long, slow drive up 'Plane Spotter's Lane' in order to get to the track's entrance but what does that matter? Besides there isn't too much the DMP team can do about the long, public, pot hole filled country lane that leads to their gates!

Some of the other facilities that DMP has to offer include a comprehensive on-site shop with spares, parts and gear (they'll even help you out with a few quick fixes, tyres changes and inner tubes), flushing toilets, a burger van on weekends and a mini track for autos and minibikes.

Another example of how DMP like to reward their loyal customers is with their loyalty cards (buy four rides get one free) and their annual membership which is £500 per year and allows that person to ride at DMP as much as they like in that 12 month period.

Doncaster Moto Parc is a very welcoming practice facility that is geared to cater for the everyman hobby rider. The track is fast and fun and not too challenging but can still prove to be a great place to train for the more serious racers amongst us. If you're looking for a good time at the track with your buddies then DMP is the place to be!

### Conclusion

>Difficulty > A hobby riders dream

>Fun factor > Who doesn't have fun going fast?

>Facilities > They've got almost everything...

>Overall DBR score > A damn good time





Don't forget to check out our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/dbrmagazine](https://youtube.com/dbrmagazine) to see Max's POV edit from both DMP and FatCat

## ESSENTIAL INFO!

### DONCASTER MOTO PARC

**Website:** [www.doncastermotoparc.co.uk](http://www.doncastermotoparc.co.uk)

**Contact:** 07547 584554

**Location:** Austerfield, DN10 6QU

**Length:** 1400 metres approx

**Prices:** Kids £25, Adults £30, Mini Track £20

**Surface:** Gravel-based hardpack sand

**Shop:** Yes

**Catering:** Yes (on weekends)

**Kids track:** Yes (Mini Track)

**Bike Hire:** No

**Coaching:** Yes

**Jet Wash:** No

**Toilets/wash block:** Yes (flushable toilets)

**Opening times:** Wednesdays and Sundays  
10am – 4pm

**Difficulty:** Medium

**Enjoyment factor:** Grip it and rip it goodness

**Suitability:** Hobby rider's paradise!

**Safety:** Trained marshals and First Aiders on site

**Session length:** 20 minutes

**Groups:** Three



# ATTACK





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# TRACK ATTACK!

Handily located just off junction four of the M18, FatCat Motoparc is without doubt one of the country's premier motocross facilities. What is really impressive is that this version of FatCat has earned that reputation in just five years since it opened in 2010. This all-weather facility is open year round on Wednesdays and weekends and proves to be an ever popular training ground for pros and amateurs alike.

First impressions of FatCat Motoparc are incredibly impressive. As you drive down the long, smooth, tarmacked entrance way past the mowed lawns and the columns of trees into one of the two hard standing paddock areas you immediately get the feeling that Martin Craven and the FatCat team are serious about providing the best dirt biking experience possible for their customers.

The hard standing paddock areas ensure that there are no worries about having to get towed out on a wet winter race day and the previously mentioned tarmac driveway provides an impressive welcoming for newcomers to the sport.

FatCat Motoparc boasts an enormous amount of space, meaning that yes – there is so much room for 'activities'! This space is most definitely used efficiently – there's a permanent race track, practice track and kids tracks as well as a fully-fledged Go Kart course, with plans and ambitions of adding some enduro action into the mix down the line.

Having two separate tracks and paddocks for race days and practice days means that FatCat can open for business as usual every weekend of the year so if you just want to have some fun and spin a few laps with your buddies you can do just that even if FatCat is also hosting a local club meeting or even a national event. The only exception to this is when FatCat Motoparc plays host to the Maxxis British Motocross championship as Martin shuts down the facility and extends the race track, utilising sections of the practice track, pushing the lap times up.

Other than the hard standing paddocks, excess of space for parking and the great facilities that FatCat provides why would the UK's premier motocross championship choose to race in what really is a flat field on the edge of the M18 overlooking a big-ass Ikea warehouse? The answer is simply the unique nature of the FatCat soil.

Being one of very few tracks in the UK that can stand toe-to-toe with some of the insanely deep European sand circuits, FatCat is as tough as they come. It may surprise some people to learn that the deep sands of FatCat are all natural, particularly considering that the old Armthorpe track had a hardpack surface. However, when Martin moved down the road to the current location he conducted a few test digs and found that beneath a metre of clay lay a bottomless pit of sand. After removing 96,000 square cubic metres of clay FatCat as we know it today was revealed.

It must be said that the FatCat team has introduced some harder stuff onto the race track to keep the jumps safe and make it a little easier for the young guns racing at the club meetings. Over the years this harder stuff has been dragged around the track meaning that overall it's a little less sandy and far more manageable to ride.

The practice track is a completely different beast entirely – a bottomless pit of anguish that can eat you up and spit you out again if you are not an experienced sand rider. This can be looked at as both a positive and a negative. If you're a pro or expert level rider looking for a real work out and a damn hard training session then the FatCat practice track is the place for you! Even if you are a young club or hobby rider looking to improve your skills than there's no better place to do so – after all if you can ride in the deep stuff you can ride anything!

However if you're just a weekend warrior, a beginner or a novice rider looking for a bit of fun with your friends then the FatCat practice track maybe a little demanding and a little intimidating – particularly after a few sessions when it's really





beat up! Despite that however the track is always well groomed before every opening day meaning that if you arrive early enough you can put in a good few laps before the track is too rough and tough!

Away from the track FatCat provides a range of great amenities that really adds something a little extra to the facility. You'll never go hungry or thirsty as the permanently built burger bar, tuck shop and regular bar are in place to keep you fed and watered.

As you should expect safety is paramount here, therefore marshals and medics are always in attendance whenever the tracks are open.

We all know that suspension set up is key when riding deep sand but never fear because the on site WP service centre will help you with that.

If you're in for an overnight stay at FatCat before your race on a Sunday then the arrive and drive Go Kart track provides some adrenaline inducing evening entertainment and a great way to blow off steam after a long hard days riding on the practice track.

FatCat Motoparc has rightly become one of the country's premier motocross facilities. The deep sand is enough to challenge the best of the best and the newly redesigned practice and race tracks are fast and fun once you get into the flow of sand riding.

However the nature of sand riding and the skills and fitness needed to ride it well may be a little too much for the average hobby rider particularly those just starting out. Nevertheless FatCat Motoparc is a place that every moto dude should experience for themselves!

## Conclusion

> **Difficulty** Practice track – a bottomless pit of pain and anguish.

Race track – sandy but manageable.

> **Fun factor** > Herlings would have a blast!

> **Facilities** > They've got a frickin' Go Kart track...

> **Overall DBR score** > Incredible facility.

Bring your bucket and spade.

## ESSENTIAL INFO!

### FATCAT MOTOPARC

**Website:** [www.fatcatmotoparc.com](http://www.fatcatmotoparc.com)

**Contact:** 07990 514509

**Location:** Armthorpe, DN3 3EH

**Length:** Race track 1750m,  
Maxxis race track 2000m

**Prices:** Main Track £30 Kids Track £20

**Surface:** Deep sand

**Shop:** Yes

**Catering:** Yes

**Kids track:** Yes

**Bike Hire:** No

**Coaching:** Yes

**Jet Wash:** No

**Toilets/wash block:** Yes (Portaloos)

**Opening times:** Wednesdays, Saturdays and  
Sundays 10am – 4pm

**Difficulty:** High

**Enjoyment factor:** If you like sand, you'll love this

**Suitability:** Weekend warrior to pro!

**Safety:** Trained marshals and medics on site

**Session length:** 20 minutes

**Groups:** Three







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Words by Geoff Walker



# ALPHA BETAS!

ALL THE 2016 BETAS ARE BELTERS BUT THE NEW TWO-STROKES MIGHT JUST BE THE CREAM OF THE CROP...



**S**o the big news on the two-stroke models is the introduction of an oil injection system that basically delivers the premium fuel-oil mix at any engine speed and also saves riders from having to pre-mix fuel. So as well as being labour saving for us dirty dirt bikers the system reduces exhaust smoke by half which is good news for environmentalists too.

These technological improvements not only mean Beta are ahead of their rivals in terms of technology but are also offering their customers the optimum riding experience. Seeing this company advance is a good thing and the company as a whole are maturing in their attitude towards the enduro and trail riding world.

The management in this streamlined and hard working company seem to have changed their way of thinking to primarily offer an incredibly solid and reliable product which they hope will increase worldwide sales in due course.

Of course, there is a maximum number of motorcycles that Beta can produce and so their market share can only reach so far. The Italians seem comfortable with this and the improvement in their products is clear to see and feel in the ride of the bikes.

The Betas of 2015 lacked some feel from the Sachs front forks and indeed the Sachs shock but the firm have worked to improve the feel and usability of the chassis as a unit. The forks with their improved flow are of course soft but with long days in the saddle this is something a test rider could easily forget in the shorter, sharper rides we get during these 'impressions' tests.

To truly test the chassis comfort the bikes need to be ridden for hours. The feedback from the chassis on the two-strokes is of comfort, good traction and stability at all but the maximum speed where some extra support would be required for the highest level of competition.

The 250 motor is fully controllable and although it is way off being the fastest motor out there its controllable nature will appeal to

true enduro riders. This bike hooks up well but can lack a little finesse in its transfer from low-range to mid when the light nature of the bike will cause it to break free from the ultimate grip of the Michelin tyres.

This of course should be the case with any 250 two-stroke and control is easily found again. The 2015 250 felt slightly more meaty in its power delivery and this could point to the oil injection almost working too well to provide the perfect mixture at all throttle openings where sometimes pre-mix will give a 'fatter' feel to the jetting when rolling on the power in aggressive situations.

The 300 motor is sublime in its delivery and although it gives a similar feel to the 250 in its transfer through the power range at speed this is dulled down as the level of torque takes care of business.

Both these bikes feel comfortable and although there is a definite feeling of sitting up top due to the firm seat foam the comfort level is there in the ergonomics.

The Nissin brakes are almost a throwback when sitting on a European manufacturer's bike as the Brembo systems have been the boss when it comes to supply. The progressive feel from the Nissin units bring a great level of rear wheel control and the feel for the front brake allows for very aggressive braking even on off-camber slippery dust turns.

Both the bikes will run approximately three full tanks of fuel with a full oil tank and the dashboard indicator light warns you when you are on your final tank full. If the oil pump system fails there is a warning light on the dash which will alert you of a pump failure and at this point you would have to block off the injector pipe and pre-mix your fuel. This is of course another thing which could go wrong but we were assured at the test that the firm have not had a failure and the system has run without any major problems on the X-Trainer 300 model for over a year.

Faults are difficult to find with the Beta RR 2T Beta models as they are well balanced and fun machines to ride...



## RR 2T 250

Displacement: 249cc  
Bore and stroke: 66.4 x 72mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin PXX 36  
Front suspension: 48mm Sachs  
Rear suspension: Sachs monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 290/290mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/240 mm  
Wheel base: 1482mm  
Ground clearance: 320mm  
Seat height: 930mm  
Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 104kg

## RR 2T 300

Displacement: 293.1cc  
Bore and stroke: 72 x 72mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin PXX 36  
Front suspension: 48mm Sachs  
Rear suspension: Sachs monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 290/290mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/240 mm  
Wheel base: 1482mm  
Ground clearance: 320mm  
Seat height: 930mm  
Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 104kg





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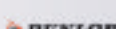


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Wakker takes a bath – his first of the year...



# WHITE HEAT!

HUSKY'S 2016 TWO-SMOKERS ARE SCORCHING HOT...

**T**here's not that much changed on the 2016 Husqvarna enduro range but the refinements that have been made are well worth it from the revised suspension and triple clamps to the gearbox mods and new rear sprocket and seat cover. Sometimes it's the little things that matter...

Out on the trail there's a world of fun to be had on the TE 125 as it lacks nothing and happily punches above its weight in all situations. This bike is light as a feather and when ridden to its strengths will turn in test times to rival any machine. Okay, there is no doubt this bike has to be ridden hard to extract the very best but the amazing pull it shows from zero to the mid-range in tricky situations coupled with its total lack of weight allows this bike to work for almost everyone from avid competitor to weekend trail rider.

The TE 250 again shows all the benefits of the now well tested motor configuration. The

power delivery is not for everyone as it hits reasonably hard although there is a certain smoothness to this punch. The mid-range hit is controllable and when you are on the gas riding the bike to its limit this transition gels to give you power when and where you need it. The light feel of the bike allows it to be ridden over any obstacle your ability will allow and as long as you are easy with the throttle traction will be found to drive or plod you forward no matter what the trail throws at you.

Huge amounts of power and torque aplenty is all I can say about the TE 300. This incredibly well proven machine has no weakness in its motor and again the improved chassis design for 2016 gives an easier ride on this fan favourite. The carburation was perfect on the day and the strong feel with ultimate control is solid to say the least on this bike. This motor has been the benchmark for many years in enduro as it makes such tremendous and usable power through its full range.



## TE 125

Displacement: 124.8cc  
Bore and stroke: 54 x 54.5mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36S AG  
Front suspension: WP 4CS fork  
Rear suspension: WP monoshock with linkage  
Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
Wheel base: 1471mm  
Ground clearance: 355mm  
Seat height: 960mm  
Fuel capacity: 11 litres  
Weight: 95.8kg

## TE 250

Displacement: 249cc  
Bore and stroke: 66.4 x 72mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36S AG  
Front suspension: WP 4CS fork  
Rear suspension: WP monoshock with linkage  
Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
Wheel base: 1482mm  
Ground clearance: 355mm  
Seat height: 960mm  
Fuel capacity: 11 litres  
Weight: 104.2kg

## TE 300

Displacement: 293.2cc  
Bore and stroke: 72 x 72mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36S AG  
Front suspension: WP 4CS fork  
Rear suspension: WP monoshock with linkage  
Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
Wheel base: 1482mm  
Ground clearance: 355mm  
Seat height: 960mm  
Fuel capacity: 11 litres  
Weight: 104.4kg



# SHERCO

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## 250 SE-R

HIGH TECH 2-STROKE, SMOOTH AND POWERFUL!

Like all Sherco models the 250 SE-R 2-stroke benefits from the latest technology and it is also equipped with an electric starter.

### 2016 EVOLUTIONS

New cylinder head  
New ignition curve calibration for a more progressive throttle response  
New valve timing  
New muffler  
New clutch that provides a better feel

New footpegs  
New rear subframe  
Optimized starting system  
New dlc water pump shaft  
New front fender and new handguards

## 300 SE-R

SMOOTH AND STRONG!

The 300 2-stroke is the perfect crossover tool. New valve timing provides even more smoothness as the horsepower builds.

### 2016 EVOLUTIONS

New cylinder head  
New piston  
New ignition curve calibration for a more progressive throttle response  
New valve timing  
New clutch that provides a better feel

New muffler  
New footpegs  
New rear subframe  
Optimized starting system  
New dlc water pump shaft  
New front fender and new handguards



## 450 SEF-R

DAKAR WITH BANNERS!

Introduced into the Sherco lineup in 2015, the 450 is the latest in a line of enduro machines specifically designed for enduro riders

### 2016 EVOLUTIONS

New piston  
New connecting rod  
New transmission gears

New keyless system  
New fuel injection mapping  
New front fender and new handguards

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# RACE READY!

ACCORDING TO GEOFFRO THE 2016 SHERCO TWO-STROKES ARE READY TO RIP RIGHT OUT OF THE CRATE...

**I**t's more about subtle improvements rather than all-out change for Sherco and their 2016 two-stroke enduro bikes which isn't necessarily a bad thing.

The initial feeling you get is one of sitting 'on' the bike which will suit some but maybe not others. There's nothing uncomfortable about the seating position and in fact quite the opposite is true and the bikes feel firm and purposeful for what they are intended to do.

This purpose, for all I can see from the French Factory, is to go racing at a good level. The two-stroke Sherco's are for the want of better words – 'kick ass'...

These things haul ass in the motor department like few enduro – or for that fact MX – bikes I have ridden in all my years. To say the 250 and 300 Sherco's are fast is an understatement but both bikes are more useable and friendly than the 2015 models and this is to do with the 'softer' mapping on the switchable ignition being softer than the previous model.

Basically, hitting the full power on these bikes is like The Hoff hitting the Turbo Boost button on K.I.T.T! Both the 250 and 300 will suck in the

scenery in some kind of scene from the Matrix – they are that fast. Hats off to the Sherco crew, they have produced two of the fastest two-stroke motorcycles this planet has ever seen.

To put this into perspective and on the gnarly rock hard terrain we had at our disposal for our test loop it was almost impossible to use the bikes in their full-power mode to make a lap without overshooting at least two turns by a distance. This provided a massive smile on my large chops and cast my mind to how much fun it would be to have this kind of power on tap in some sand or deep loamy going...

Of course with power you require control and this is where the chassis also begs for forgiving terrain. The WP suspension on the Sherco 250 and 300 is set incredibly stiff for anything resembling enduro terrain for mere mortals. The bikes both skipped around on top of every nook and cranny on the loop and the steering pinged off what felt like invisible objects.

The feeling and response from the chassis as a whole was way off on the baked hard



## 250 SE-R

Displacement: 249.32cc  
Bore and stroke: 66.4 x 72mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36  
Front suspension: 48mm WP fork  
Rear suspension: WP monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
Wheel base: 1480mm  
Ground clearance: 355mm  
Seat height: 950mm  
Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 105kg

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terrain of Southern France. My experience from the previous models pointed to the terrain outlining the issues with the suspension. Last year we tested the bikes on varying terrain between hard, soft, rocks, roots, Endurocross and MX whereas this year we had only baked gnarly dirt with short sharp kicker bumps. The chassis could not react to the terrain as the level of stiffness from the WP units would not allow it in its stock form.

My solution to make the bike more friendly was to back everything off on compression including high and low speed on the rear shock. I opened rebound all but three clicks out to allow some flow and hit the track. This brought a great reaction from the bike with traction, comfort and the ease of ride improved by at least 60 per cent. Both bikes were much easier to ride in both power modes and the steering feel was drastically improved as the front end would track rather than dance around and kick confidence in the teeth...

To sum things up, the Sherco two-strokes are blindingly fast with an incredibly stiff feeling in the chassis. The bikes feel very racy in their position and if you feel the need for speed these French, blue machines could be your weapon of choice...

### 300 SE-R

Displacement: 293.14cc  
 Bore and stroke: 72 x 72mm  
 Transmission: 6 gears  
 Fuel system: Keihin PWK 36  
 Front suspension: 48mm WP fork  
 Rear suspension: WP monoshock  
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
 Wheel base: 1480mm  
 Ground clearance: 355mm  
 Seat height: 950mm  
 Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres  
 Dry Weight: 105kg





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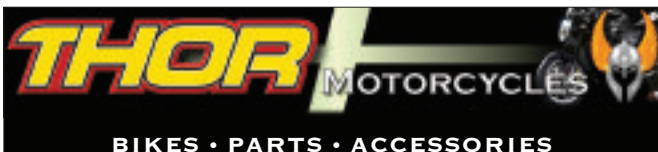
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# THUMPER STUMPER!

WILL THE INTRODUCTION OF EFI ACROSS THE FULL RANGE IMPROVE BETA'S FOUR-STROKE OFFERINGS?

**T**he main innovation on the 2016 RR Enduro range is the introduction of the electronic fuel injection system on all four-stroke models. Fuel injection was originally introduced on the 2015 350 RR model and proved to be much more efficient than a carburettor mostly thanks to its great reliability.

Since then Beta's engineers have worked directly with Synerject to create an EFI system that works well across all the range. With its 42mm diameter throttle body the system ensures precise fuel delivery giving riders spontaneous and linear throttle response insuring a smooth and predictable power delivery that is synonymous with Beta.

A variety of engine mods promise to improve power delivery across the range too while updated suspension and some attention to the chassis promises to sweeten the handling.

The baby in the Beta four-stroke bunch – that's the RR 350 – is a bike that pretty much everyone could go out and take on the world with. Thanks to the fuel injection system the power is on tap at all times and with a rev happy bike like this there is fun to be had. This bike is fast but at no time does the power become too much.

This bike does exactly as it should with no fuss and has an easy to handle chassis set-up. As with all the 2016 Beta four-strokes the suspension goes through its stroke on the forks quite quickly but with a lot more control than the 2015 bike. The rear shock holds up in the middle of the stroke so to help this I closed the fork rebound five clicks on every bike to address the balance across the chassis. This worked well as

I find the forks more supportive with this slight increase in damping force.

With the chassis on all the Betas working well it was the motors and their separate characteristics which made the difference on different parts of the test loop that had varying terrain from flat and cambered special test turns into the wooded and hillside sections. The 390 is a motor which likes to be bossed to get the best results and the extra torque over the 350 allows a level of control when the going gets loose. The smooth power delivery from the motor made exiting uphill off cambered turns particularly easy.

The 430 model does everything incredibly well as you would expect but this was the least controllable motor for me and there was a slightly more aggressive nature just between low and mid-range which would cause some extra work. This would become less noticeable in faster flowing terrain where there was good grip. As with all tests we must report as we find and when your siblings are performing almost perfectly it is easy to find slight imperfections.

The 480 machine has a big motor with fantastic manners. This bike is a great package and dare I say it, the big motor would work for almost everyone. The smooth delivery and the way it not only accelerates but decelerates is very, very friendly to the rider. This bike I chose to do my longest ride on in the sweltering 42 degree heat and it looked after my body, hands and everything else during the ride. There is a smoothness to this bike which will make it a favourite in the hands of any riders who are looking for a bike to get them from A-to-B across any terrain on their weekend rides.

## RR 350

Displacement: 349.1cc  
Bore and stroke: 88 x 57.4mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Synerject EFI  
Front suspension: 48mm Sachs  
Rear suspension: Sachs monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 290/290mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/240 mm  
Wheel base: 1490mm  
Ground clearance: 320mm  
Seat height: 940mm  
Fuel capacity: 8 litres  
Dry Weight: 111.5kg

## RR 390

Displacement: 385.6cc  
Bore and stroke: 88 x 63.4mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Synerject EFI  
Front suspension: 48mm Sachs  
Rear suspension: Sachs monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 290/290mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/240 mm  
Wheel base: 1490mm  
Ground clearance: 320mm  
Seat height: 940mm  
Fuel capacity: 8 litres  
Dry Weight: 111.5kg

## RR 430

Displacement: 430.9cc  
Bore and stroke: 95 x 60.8mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Synerject EFI  
Front suspension: 48mm Sachs  
Rear suspension: Sachs monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 290/290mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/240 mm  
Wheel base: 1490mm  
Ground clearance: 320mm  
Seat height: 940mm  
Fuel capacity: 8 litres  
Dry Weight: 112.5kg

## RR 480

Displacement: 477.5cc  
Bore and stroke: 100 x 60.8mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Synerject EFI  
Front suspension: 48mm Sachs  
Rear suspension: Sachs monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 290/290mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/240 mm  
Wheel base: 1490mm  
Ground clearance: 320mm  
Seat height: 940mm  
Fuel capacity: 8 litres  
Dry Weight: 112.5kg



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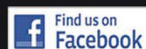


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# FRENCH TOAST!

SHERCO HAS GOT PLENTY TO CELEBRATE HAVING DONE AN AWESOME JOB BUILDING THEIR 2016 FOUR-STROKE ENDURO BIKES...

**W**ith three four-strokes in the 2016 MY range – 250, 300 and 450 – Sherco have got pretty much all bases covered for the off-road warrior.

The big surprise in the bunch is the 450 which in its first year – 2015 – was a bit of an animal in all departments. As far as enduro bikes went it was simply too much to handle for mere mortals but the crew in blue have tamed the beast and I really enjoyed riding the daddy of the range.

Admittedly, the softer power option was engaged to find the best of the bike but the power delivery was incredibly smooth and pleasant making the bike work with control. The bike had a tendency to cough to a stall in the early part of the day but this seemed to relate to the motor feeling quite tight and new and by the time I rode the bike to finish my day some six hours later it was running free and easy.

The suspension settings – which I am led to believe is the same setting for two and four-strokes – works much better with the

weight and power delivery from the four-stroke. This is not surprising and with only a couple of clicks off on all the four-strokes they were all much more useable than their 2T brothers.

The smooth ride on the 450 was fun to say the least and on the terrain we tested on with the 40 degree heat the bike worked with me as a rider rather than against me. The 2016 450 feels light and manoeuvrable and is much improved over the 2015 model.

The 300 model is a bit of a favourite with this Northern Irishman and the afternoon delight this bike brings is right up there with the best and the ignition settings with the RPM drop are very noticeable in the ride. When you drop the throttle right off the motor responds to allow you a good level of braking and rear wheel steering into the naughtiest of flat turns. I like this feeling as it provides fun and adds control of the bike as a unit.

The suspension again needed some slight softening to gain confidence on the terrain and with all the bikes the brakes, control and

shifting were flawless. This bike produces fantastic power and is on tap and ready for every situation you could encounter out on the trails.

The baby of the bunch – that's the SEF-R 250 – is one incredible machine. This bike went down as one of my top three bikes of all-time after all the 2015 tests were complete and the 2016 model does not disappoint.

This little bike covers all bases and is equally as happy being ridden in full-on attack mode or indeed a cruising, confidence inspiring trail ride. The fun is there ready to be unleashed with this bike and it felt like a factory bike in comparison to the stock feel of the rest of the range.

This bike really does have it all. The chassis felt settled and from the top drawer and the motor wants to help out with your day. I was literally able to cut it loose on this bike with incredible confidence in both the tight and fast sections of the lap. This bike basically does nothing wrong and is definitely a contender to be my bike of the year.



250 SEF-R

Displacement: 248.6cc  
Bore and stroke: 76 x 54.8mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Synerject digital EFI  
Front suspension: 48mm WP fork  
Rear suspension: WP monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
Wheel base: 1480mm  
Ground clearance: 355mm  
Seat height: 950mm  
Fuel capacity: 8.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 102kg



300 SEF-R

Displacement: 303.68cc  
Bore and stroke: 84 x 54.8mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Synerject digital EFI  
Front suspension: 48mm WP fork  
Rear suspension: WP monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
Wheel base: 1480mm  
Ground clearance: 355mm  
Seat height: 950mm  
Fuel capacity: 8.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 102kg



450 SEF-R

Displacement: 449.4cc  
Bore and stroke: 95 x 63.4mm  
Transmission: 6 gears  
Fuel system: Synerject digital EFI  
Front suspension: 48mm WP fork  
Rear suspension: WP monoshock  
Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
Wheel base: 1490mm  
Ground clearance: 355mm  
Seat height: 950mm  
Fuel capacity: 8.5 litres  
Dry Weight: 110kg



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# ALTERED BEASTS!

WILL REFINEMENT AND REVISION BE ENOUGH TO KEEP THE FOUR-STROKE HUSQVARNAS AT THE FRONT OF THE PACK?



It's already been mentioned that it's more about refinement and revision rather than all out newness when it comes to Husqvarna's 2016 enduro models. That's definitely not a negative thing as the whole range is solid.

With new clamps, a slightly smaller axle (22 instead of 26mm) and updated forks it's no surprise that the front end on all models performs much differently to the past. There's now a more stable feeling in the steering which adds to the level of confidence that can be found. On the faster MX style sections of the fantastic enduro loop provided the forks would dip a little in true 4CS style if being pushed hard in the middle of the turn but the improvement in all areas – especially bottoming resistance – is very noticeable as the feel for terrain is improved as it transfers through to the bars and offers a higher level of control.

The improvement to the forks is a massive step forwards as the previous 4CS forks have until now needed a little work to get the best

performance from them.

With the forks working to a higher level the shock is found wanting a little in the mid-stroke. There is a fast ramp up which causes a slight sticky point in the stroke which could easily be worked out and is a common feel through the shock and linkage on the Austrian machines of either colour when the shocks are set at anything but almost their softest in compression damping on both high and low-speed.

As with all the range the brakes, clutch and seating to newer flatter handlebar design are all comfortable for short bursts as well as longer trail rides too.

The FE 250 motor is a blast and it's free revving nature screams quality. This motor is solid and does everything really well. This bike is fast and is quick through the rev range yet not too quick as to cause stress in low grip areas.

The FE 350 really is the everyman machine and behaves impeccably. The power output is now settled in with its reliability and this bike can be ridden perfectly at every pace known

to the dirt biking human race. This motor pulls from nothing and offers the rider complete control at every point in the rev range.

The FE450 offers the racer something to get their teeth into while the manners stay almost in check. This is the bike which offers the strongest power out on the trails as it likes to take you through the rev range and gets you working hard. I took the 450 for some 'off-piste' action and it coped well blasting up the technical uphill through some boggy and rocky conditions.

The big boy FE 501 is a pleasure to ride out on the trails. This bike has great manners for what it is designed for – fast open trails and giving great rider feedback in all situations. Being honest you are not going to ride an extreme enduro on this bike so the feeling of the motor balanced with the new chassis set-up sets this bike up as a favourite for any rider to hit the open trails and when necessary make your eyeballs sink into your head when tapped out in top gear. Holy McMoly she's fast Batman!



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## FE 250

Displacement: 249.91cc  
 Bore and stroke: 78 x 52.3mm  
 Transmission: 6 gears  
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI  
 Front suspension: WP 4CS fork  
 Rear suspension: WP monoshock with linkage  
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
 Wheel base: 1482mm  
 Ground clearance: 345mm  
 Seat height: 970mm  
 Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres  
 Dry Weight: 107.3kg

## FE 350

Displacement: 349.7cc  
 Bore and stroke: 88 x 57.5mm  
 Transmission: 6 gears  
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI  
 Front suspension: WP 4CS fork  
 Rear suspension: WP monoshock with linkage  
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
 Wheel base: 1482mm  
 Ground clearance: 345mm  
 Seat height: 970mm  
 Fuel capacity: 9.5 litres  
 Dry Weight: 109kg

## FE 450

Displacement: 449.3cc  
 Bore and stroke: 95 x 63.4mm  
 Transmission: 6 gears  
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI  
 Front suspension: WP 4CS fork  
 Rear suspension: WP monoshock with linkage  
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
 Wheel base: 1482mm  
 Ground clearance: 345mm  
 Seat height: 970mm  
 Fuel capacity: 9 litres  
 Dry Weight: 112.8kg

## FE 501

Displacement: 510.4cc  
 Bore and stroke: 95 x 72mm  
 Transmission: 6 gears  
 Fuel system: Keihin EFI  
 Front suspension: WP 4CS fork  
 Rear suspension: WP monoshock with linkage  
 Suspension travel front/rear: 300/330mm  
 Front/rear brakes: Disc brake 260/220 mm  
 Wheel base: 1482mm  
 Ground clearance: 345mm  
 Seat height: 970mm  
 Fuel capacity: 9 litres  
 Dry Weight: 113.3kg



*New triple clamps and a smaller diameter front axle are two of the refinements made to the 2016 MY range*











# THE Next ONE

WITH JUST A FEW ROUNDS REMAINING TIM GAJSER LOOKS LIKELY TO LIFT THE MX2 WORLD TITLE. HAS THE 18 YEAR OLD SLOVENIAN GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO HOLD IT TOGETHER?

Words by **Adam Wheeler** Photos by **Ray Archer**

It has become almost perilous to write about the 2015 FIM Motocross World Championship. Will the finished copy make print and magazine shelves before the subject of a story has had their circumstances changed immeasurably? Or a situation in the points has rendered the article worthless? After all we started the year writing about Villopoto. Then Desalle ran hot, Nagl won three, Cairoli cinched his first GP on the 450, Herlings was coming back and Max Anstie's fortunes seem to swing by the minute. Motocross hasn't been kind to many people in '15.

You almost don't want to go near HRC Gariboldi's Tim Gajser. A powerhouse of a rider and racer that can win four Grands Prix in a single season at the age of 18 but then also bin his CRF250RW in warm-up at Matterley Basin and miss a round of the series altogether.

At the time of deciding to bite-the-bullet and pen this interview Gajser is tied in second place in the MX2 standings. With Jeffrey Herlings out for the rest of 2015 the Slovenian is now in a position to win the title in only his third GP term and second on the red factory bikes. Honda

have not celebrated a world championship for 15 years.

Gajser deserves special attention. Not because he is one of the chief protagonists in MX2 but he is the only one to have followed in that freak trend begun in 2009-2010 when teenagers like Ken Roczen and Herlings started celebrating Grand Prix triumphs in their mid-teens.

Gajser was prolific through the juniors adding the 125 European Championship to 85 and 65 crowns. He did not have the immediate impact of Roczen and Herlings but this might have something to do with his origins from a country hardly rich in deep motocross heritage.

He won everywhere on a two-stroke and while he might have been more memorable for fence-flattening accidents at Matterley (perhaps a bogey circuit?) during his 2013 MX2 apprenticeship it was clear that Tim was going to standout quickly and while still so young.

Dissatisfied with KTM at the

end of that debut term in 2013 he severed ties and opted to join Honda and the Italian Gariboldi crew.

Entering the blood-red awning in the Grand Prix paddock now the saying 'blood thicker than water' comes to mind. Tim Gajser's racing effort is not about one athlete. His family is constant, with the presence of animated father Bogi and his brother on practice mechanic duties while his mother and younger sister are easily spotted with their distinctive yellow '243' caps. They are a clan and a gaggle.

"It is a completely different family compared to what we usually see," offers Team Manager and Owner Giacomo Gariboldi. "It is very traditional and they want to stay together all the time and they all work for him. >>



Tim celebrates beating Jeffrey Herlings and reigning world champ Jordi Tixier at the Italian GP



With these kinds of roots I don't think he will split from them. Many riders start racing with their dads but then they find a girlfriend or something else they split away. I think Tim will be different. He will always be connected and you have to understand this when you start working with him. If you want to take him away from the family then it will not work. I think other teams or brands might have tried this."

We spoke to the Italian, HRC General Manager Roger Harvey, long-term rival Rockstar Energy Suzuki's Jeremy Seewer, tested Bogo Gajser's limited-but-fun English to the max when talking about his son and then finally sat down with Tim himself, who comes across as a light-hearted and shy young man who has an endearing habit of starting each answer with a giggle.

The aim was to try and understand some of the unusual dynamic that surrounds the eastern European, why he is so phenomenally fast – to the point where he could be the new world champion – and what he could still possibly go on to achieve. Followers of Grand Prix knew that Gajser was a treasure for the series already in 2014 and thankfully he has made the step to race winner and potentially more in less than 12 months.

"I grew up with him on 85s," says Seewer, 21 years old, owner of three podiums in 2015 and also in the mix for the MX2 throne. "I was top five and going for the podium but he was winning already at a young age. We always seem to meet each other at the races because he was riding German Championship rounds as well. Now we are in GPs and he is winning again at 18. He is on a good level at the moment and he deserves it but from my point of view I want to do better! It is strange to see people who were so fast years ago and now cannot do it in GPs and others that seem to have come out of nowhere and are doing very well. Tim has been fast all the way through."

"When we went for him in the beginning we knew he still had a contract with KTM but we also knew that he was thinking of splitting," says Gariboldi, offering some background on the Honda link-up. "I said to everybody 'if we

want a young rider...then Tim is the guy'. I got the phone number through a contact for Golden Tyre and we met towards the end of that season [2013].

"My first thoughts were that he was a very shy and nice guy, very well educated and clever for his age. He was still studying which was not very common in the paddock. He said it was very important for him to keep going with the schooling. My first impression was really good. You saw somebody who really wanted to reach the top and it showed through all the results in his career until that point and he has won in every category that he has raced."

"To be honest we did not know how deeply we would get involved in MX2 but we were looking for an opportunity," says Harvey. "We were very late sorting the programme and making the decision about MX2 officially and looking around Tim was one of the riders that became available. We had seen flashes of brilliance...and also seen what was a 17 year old kid at the same time! We've seen many riders with those flashes and at that age they can do it, they have all the tricks on the bike and everything they need and some continue to crash whereas others mature and stop. I've seen it so many times over the years and the feeling at that time was that Tim would settle. We saw him as a good opportunity."

"I said to Massimo Castelli [Team Director] that for me Tim could be the next Herlings and everything in his career points that way," says Gariboldi. "When you win every category you are in every year it means that you become familiar with winning and eventually that would come through to the MX2 class."

Clearly bubbling with the X-factor and a riding style in the Herlings mould that is fully expressive, aggressive and attacking, Gajser had to develop professionally while juggling two lives: one of the burgeoning star and a rising profile in a country with a population of just over two million and prolificacy in winter sports and the other of a part-time student desperately trying to graduate.

"Two years ago Tim said to me 'please, all the other riders have stopped the school...' and

I said 'no, you must go. I don't care about other riders', says Bogo. "It has been a few years now but he is finally happy to finish!"

"It is amazing how his character has changed now that his school and exams have finished," offers Harvey. "This was a kid who was doing his classes and exams until 3pm on a Friday and then driving overnight to the Grand Prix and finishing on the podium. He's changed that now."

**DBR:** Tim, what changed for 2015?

**TG:** "Last year was the first for me with Honda and everything was new and different because from 50cc all the way until MX2 in 2013 I was riding KTMs. I didn't know any other brand and it was a big step to change the team. 2014 was already pretty good and I didn't expect that much [for 2015]. We started slowly but during the races we were improving and I was also getting better. We worked hard and the results came in the second half of the season."

**DBR:** How did it feel with people talking about you, Herlings, Ferrandis in the same lines for the title this year?

**TG:** "It was huge. Jeffrey is really famous, a two time world champion and a big name in motocross already. I feel that if you work hard and train a lot then it pays off. You just need to keep working, working, working."

**DBR:** Your Dad said that two years ago you asked to stop school but he said no. How difficult was it to live both lives – student and Grand Prix winner?

**TG:** "Really hard. Moving from the 85s to the 125s was not so big and we didn't have that many races but when we switched to MX2 it was really tough – both for the preparation we had to do and all the travelling. Most of time I was in school through the winter when I was back home in Slovenia. That was when I did most of my exams and the spring and summer was about training, travelling and racing. I had to study also while doing that. For sure it was not easy to think about world championship motocross and then also remember and think



about your studies. It was two big things to deal with and I'm glad one has finished!"

**DBR:** What did you specialise in? Engineering? Maths?

**TG:** "It was actually economics and business."

**DBR:** Was it easy for you?

**TG:** "I got a lot of help at the school and the staff there knew I was racing motocross at a high level. The teachers were great and so were my classmates."

**DBR:** So now you can organise your contracts and deals quite well...

**TG:** "Haha. Actually the way it works with me is that we have a family meeting and we all speak about an offer or a contract and we make a choice. Of course it helps to be good with the numbers! I was studying a lot of mathematics."

**DBR:** Even working out points during a moto...

**TG:** "Haha...never a problem with that during the race."

Perhaps a fair word for Gajser senior – a competent racer in his own right – is 'intense'. We've been assured in the past that the raised voice and dramatic gestures when talking with his son is merely Bogo's way of communicating, rather than blowing a fuse. The two are often joined at the hip.

"It is a family unit," reveals Harvey. "We got to know them and had a good first meeting. Pappa has a reputation and there is no use hiding behind it but we have a great understanding...most of the time! Tim will say 'I need my dad' because he is helping him substantially – that's fine and his brother is coming into it now as well. We are not restricted in the way we work because of it and Bogo knows what Tim wants, usually they will say the same stuff to the engineers even though they haven't had the chance to talk. It is uncanny."

"I think the other teams were scared-off by the father and that was our advantage because from the beginning I got on very well with his Dad," says Gariboldi. "We have a good relationship and I think that is also because – for the first time – they found somewhere that would allow them to be part of the team. I said to his Dad 'as you train Tim, you need to be paid for that' I wanted to integrate him into the set up and it worked for everybody."

"He understands motocross and this is the good side," he continues. "Sometimes it is not easy to handle everything but you have to be clever and accept what he says and wants for the bike and the rider. Sometimes we have gone against him and had some little fights but for the most part it is okay."

"We've seen father-and-son combinations over the years and some work and some don't but this one does," offers Harvey.

"It was strange in the beginning because in the meetings with all the Japanese engineers he wanted to attend and said he had made all the settings for the bikes for Tim in the past," Gariboldi goes on. "The Japanese were a bit unsure about him because he wanted to talk and decide and the Japanese work in a special way. So I had to distance him initially but then I think they also understood that it was important he was there because during training he could stand at the side of the track and immediately see what was working or not working on the bike. Tim would come in and his comments would be the same. Both of them are a good team and both can give the engineers good information."

"Tim works very hard but it is also hard to do it as father and son," Bogo himself admits. "Around the ages of 13, 14, 15 it was easy. Now growing up sometimes I have to be harder and it is difficult! We had a talk after England [British GP] and we decided that we needed a new way to work...and then the results started to come. We said that we both needed to change and it worked out."

**DBR:** There was disappointment with the visa in Qatar (he arrived very late after a frantic scramble to travel), the heat in Thailand (he couldn't ride the second race after treatment) the crash in warm-up in England (concussion)... mentally it must be hard to deal with that so how do you get back to a good level?

**TG:** "Like you said, the beginning was tough and we seemed to have many different kinds of problems. It was hard but I had learned a little bit in the last few years how to 'switch off' mentally. 2013 was bad. Almost every race something happened – the bike would stop or I'd crash. It was the biggest downer of my career and I learned how to ignore some of it because

everything is in your head, you know? You have to be strong mentally and focus.

"I don't know how to explain it really but I just 'turn off' and change a little bit and that worked from Argentina and the race was good in Arco [his first GP win]. After that I think I put too much pressure on myself because the bad weekends came up again at Valkenswaard and the first moto in Spain was so-so. The two 'zeros' at Matterley Basin was another low point of this season. After that I changed again, this time in my relationship with my Dad and it worked out well and we are going in the right direction."

**DBR:** What was said? Did you want him more as a father or a trainer/coach?

**TG:** "We talked about many things and we felt things were not in the right direction. So we switched and now it is working...and I don't really want talk about how!"

**DBR:** Your brother seems to be here a lot more so is he also helping out?

**TG:** "Yes, he finished school last year so in 2014 he couldn't come to many races. This year he is helping me a lot. He is my practice mechanic. We get on well and have a lot of fun together. It is a big plus to have many members from your family close to you at the races. He always trains with me on the bike but when it comes to the fitness and I ask if he wants to come then he just smiles at me."

**DBR:** You seem quite similar in age...

**TG:** "He was born in December, so just nine months older."

**DBR:** If someone told you in Qatar that you'd win four GPs this year and be going for the title what would you say?

**TG:** "Haha. It is a step-by-step thing. We would want to be on the bike and having fun." >>

Gajser weighs up the best way to shave some time off during a qualifying session





**DBR:** Stop. I want a good answer to this. Four Grands Prix and effectively leading the world championship...

**TG:** "Hahaha. It is great! Okay, I would have expected to win something this year but not so much. Honestly you come into a season like this with great expectation...but also not so much. You don't want your hopes going too high because you can become really disappointed. You have to be realistic and maybe even try and lower your expectations because then when you do better it feels better – it is all mental. Last year I took quite a few podiums and won the last moto of the season so there were expectations for 2015. I try to keep calm...but also what I said about looking to have fun is true because anything can happen at any moment and we've seen that this year."

**DBR:** Talking of expectations...you have to think about maybe being world champion this year...

**TG:** "I'm sorry for Jeffrey because he was really strong this season and if he hadn't had broken the collarbone or damaged the finger then he would have already been close to being the champion. But this is motocross. We still have a lot of racing ahead."

**DBR:** I understand when you say you have to focus race by race but also it must be hard not to think and dream about what could happen...

**TG:** "Yeah...you do have it at the back of your mind. But it is not good to think too much. Training, racing and consistency those have to be the most important things."

**DBR:** Honda can rightly value you as one of their big stars. There is perhaps no other off-road athlete in red performing like you this year. How does that make you feel? Especially because it might give you the power to ask about other career choices like MXGP or the AMA...

**TG:** "It is a good feeling...but I am aware of trying to keep my feet on the ground. I don't want to 'fly'. When I first came into the world championship I was asking for autographs and posters from the other riders! I want to try and be the same and it is important not to forget the people that bring you to a high point or maybe where I am now because they have also sacrificed something. The beginning is key and so important to a career...when someone manages to do something like give you bikes for free I don't forget that."

Ah, bikes. Anybody who has watched an MX2 Grand Prix moto trackside will know that Gajser likes to push the CRF250RW to extremes.

"He is hard on the RPM of the bike but he has always been that way," says Harvey. "Take the Swedish GP this year. When he was having a ding-dong with Jeffrey then you could really hear the bike over the jumps, when that settled down then you didn't really get it. It's something we have had to work on and cater for. He's has changed a bit but needs to work on being more sympathetic to the engine."

"He really needs power," states Gariboldi. "He is a big kid. He wants and he really uses all the power you can give him. On the 450 he is even faster than the 250 which is good for his future."

"I think he is really strong," muses Seewer. "He is a muscular guy but he is also a good rider. I don't like his style that much actually because sometimes it just seems that he pulls the pin on the throttle and uses the clutch all the way. I think after two laps his clutch is f'cked. That's his way and I'm the opposite. I think I can go for 10 races with the same clutch! He is pretty aggressive but is also a fair rider."

**DBR:** I was talking with some of the Honda guys and you seem to be very hard on the bike...

**TG:** "Haha..."

**DBR:** Are you pushing harder this year or is it the same old Tim Gajser?

**TG:** "I'm going hard and I know it. The HRC stuff and the staff is so good. The people and the team work so well. I'm very happy. We are all like a big family there and everybody is very focussed on the race. We are smiling beforehand though and that's something I like a lot. We don't over-think the race but also we are very set on what we are doing this combination is only possible with the right people around you."

We've already established that Gajser operates best as part of a collective but it should have been bigger. Tim keeps his 243 number as a marker of tribute to a brother he never knew. One that was lost in an accident related to the sport. "The number on the plate means a lot and if you see before the race then he is always looking to the sky," says Gariboldi. "It is part of the strength of the family."

"My family is always together and this is important for good results," stresses Bogo. "Motocross is in our blood. It is one for all and all for one whether we are building a new house or Tim is going for a championship."

**DBR:** What is the story about '243'?

**TG:** "I started riding with it in 2009 because I had a Croatian licence. I became European 65 champion with that licence. I was doing some Slovenian races and I was just given this number one day: 243. We didn't see the meaning of it at the time. At that moment I had 116 and that was my number and I didn't want to change it. One night my Dad thought about it and it became a big deal for us and all my family – the birthday of my brother. From that moment I took the number forever. I know he is with me for every race and every win and podium is for him."

**DBR:** Is that another reason why the family is close?







Team boss Giacomo Gariboldi has real faith in the Slovenian's talents



Tim's dad Bogo plays a major part in the success of his son...

**TG:** "Actually yeah. It was a tough time but he died before I was born, in 1995 and I came along in '96. I did not know him...but it is tough. Anyway, always 'head up and go forward'."

**DBR:** People identify your strength as one of your attributes...

**Gariboldi:** "Physically he is a bull! He can go for two motos without pause. It is unbelievable how fit he is."

**DBR:** You train a lot with the 450?

**TG:** "I'm a big guy and it is easier and better to ride this bike. I ride it everywhere and train with it all the time and then race the 250."

**DBR:** Some think the 450 is too much for the highest level...

**TG:** "I think we risk our lives every time we sit on any bike. But we love riding and racing and you don't think about the speed or the size when you are doing it because you are having a lot of fun. The bad side of the sport is for sure the injuries. If you look at the lap-times then it doesn't make sense, sometimes we are faster on the 250s. It depends on the track and how it is. If there are tighter turns then you can be

faster on the 250. In supercross as well."

**DBR:** What about the rumours of you trying Anaheim 1 in January?

**TG:** "It is a big dream from when I was really young. I think any kid who starts riding and racing thinks about supercross and going to the U.S. and being in front of so many people in a stadium. The whole opening ceremony and your name being read out...it would be like 'Oh, my God'. I would love to try it and we need to discuss whether we will go to Anaheim. We will see. My Dad prepared a hard supercross track at home and I train a lot there."

**DBR:** Is your level good enough now to go?

**TG:** "Right now I would need some practice. If you have a good winter and you go in November or December and ride those American tracks then I think, yeah, I can do well. I know it is a big culture change and lifestyle change to go to the USA to race but I don't think it will be a problem."

**DBR:** As long as you can pack the whole Gajser family in a Winnebago...

**TG:** "Haha. We will see..."

Just 18 years old and on the cusp of glory means that Gajser is entering an extremely exciting phase of his career but his age and inexperience of closing out the big prizes at the highest level leaves room for improvement and development. "I think he needs more experience in the sand because you generally only find hard-pack tracks in Slovenia," believes Gariboldi. "I think he also needs to mature a bit with more GPs and more wins. More confidence. At the beginning of the season he put himself under too much pressure."

"I'm surprised at how fit he is...and he's hard! Which is another attribute," assesses Harvey. "He can take pain and in motocross you need to take and hide pain. He just needs to mature now but you can see it happening. I think he has the whole package but needs a bit of time for it to develop...bearing in mind he is still eighteen years old! He is a big lad so we have to watch carefully how big he gets but he also rides a 450 really well."

"Riders like Tim you can only find every 10 years," asserts Gariboldi. "We don't see a rider with his talent often and it is special for everybody...especially for Honda who have signed him for the long-term!"



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# SPEEDY JUNIORS!

IT'S GOOD NEWS FOR THE BRITS WHO TAKE A SOLID SILVER AT THE JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN SPAIN Photos by Nuno Laranjeira

**F**inishing as runners up in the team event – and with three individual racers inside the top 10 – the World Juniors proved to be good hunting for Brits abroad.

Competing at El Molar in Spain, Vinnie Guthrie starred in the 65s going 10-10 for ninth overall and despite two awful starts Chris Mills went 8-10 to claim a creditable seventh overall in the 85s.

Topping all of that, Conrad Mewse kept everyone on the edge of their seats with a brilliant 2-2 and came within a whisker of becoming world champion.

Having to cope with soaring temperatures, Mewse found himself bumped by Factory KTM team-mate Jorge Prado going into the first turn of moto one. Hauling his way back into contention, Mewse went from eighth to second and finished right on the tail of Kemea Yamaha's French runner Maxime Renaux.

Moto two was a similar story of exhilarating bar-to-bar combat with less than a second in it at the flag. This time Mewse claimed the holeshot and battled race long with Renaux for the title. The contest was acclaimed as one of the best ever at this level but with Renaux first to the flag he took the gold for France. Aussie

star Hunter Lawrence finished third with a 5-4 card.

In the European Open 65s Kay Karssemakers dominated with a 1-1 success for Holland and in the 85s it was podium tops for the Dutch again as Raivo Dankers took gold with a 1-3.

Rounding out the 65cc podium, Hungarian Adam Zsolt Kovacs (KTM) finished as runner-up with Radek Vetrovski (CZE - KTM) taking bronze. In the 85s it was heat two winner Brian Strubhart Moreau (FRA - Kawasaki) who filled the second step and Bastian Boegh Damm (DEN - Kawasaki) took third.

As for the other brave Brits battling through the heat, in the 65s Alfie Jones made 23rd, Ben Pratt 24th and Morgan Evans 26th. Behind Mills in the 85s Ben Clark was second best Brit in 23rd, Tom Grimshaw ended up 29th with Calum Mitchell unfortunately crashing out.

In the 125s Zander Brown fought his way through the LCQ race and ended up in 30th. Dee Jay Walker and George Grigg Pettitt went out in 125s qualification as did Adam Collings in 85cc quali.

The weekend before the World Juniors there was the EMX 65/85cc finals at Kegums in Latvia and also Masterkids in France.

The 65cc class battle it out

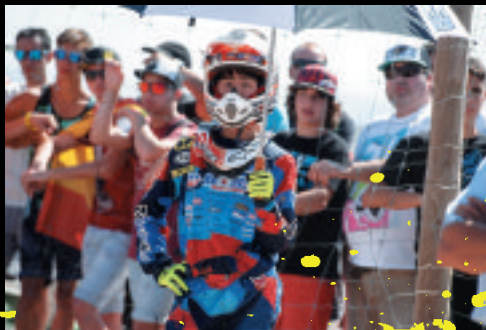


Christopher Mills was our only representative in Latvia and it didn't exactly go smoothly for him. In the opening moto he crashed on the start straight before charging from 28th place up to eighth. In moto two his throttle cable failed on the sighting lap and that was game over.

As far as podium celebrations went in Latvia there were heaps of success for the Dutch as they scooped both titles. Scott Smulders beat fellow countryman Karssemakers to the 65cc crown and in the 85s it was Dankers nailing the first part of a memorable double. Danish runner Bastian Boegh Damm claimed EMX 85s silver.

At Verdun for Masterkids a spirited combined effort by Team GB ended with them claiming fourth overall. From the 27 competing nations, Team USA with their biggest squad of recent years took the overall win.

Claiming a win in his qualifying races, Calum Mitchell went on to be one of the best of the Brits. In his Gold Final a full-blooded effort saw him challenging for the lead before eventually slipping back to third. Dylan Spencer was another who excelled and he too bagged a third place Gold Final finish.







Ollie Osmaston holds the championship lead

# MAXXIS MAYHEM!

IT'S BEEN A MIXED UP YEAR IN THE MXY2 SERIES...

**S**et up nationally to be the toughest test for British youth before hitting the pro ranks, the Maxxis MXY2 series has filled its 2015 brief nicely.

While other 'British championships' have failed to attract the best of the best all the way through the card, they're all on the line for the top ACU series and with three rounds down there are two left to run with round four hitting Preston Docks on September 6.

After nailing two moto wins and a fourth, Conrad Mewse (Factory Racing KTM) was the round three victor at Blaxhall Pits. With a break in his 125cc Euro commitments this was a one-off scintillating show from Mewse and Oliver Osmaston currently leads the championship chase.

With four moto wins so far, last season's runner-up Osmaston (MXW Chichester Honda) opened up this year by going 1-1-2 at Lyng. Taking the other moto win and second on the box at Lyng was Jay Hague (Monster Energy DRT Kawasaki) who then claimed another single moto victory and the series lead at round two at Canada Heights.

Osmaston won twice in Kent but with one DNS on his card he had to settle for third overall. Splitting the series leaders was David Keet (Danger UK Husqvarna) who went 6-2-6.

Going into round three with Hague and Osmaston as the dominating duo it was shaping up as a terrific dog fight – similar to last year's bash between Osmaston and Josh Gilbert. Following round two Hague had fought his way back to fitness after a broken shoulder and he was bang on the pace with third in quali at Blaxhall and was leading the opener when he crashed.

The official decision was that Hague had been knocked out which meant he was sidelined for the rest of the day but it was a verdict that didn't go down well with him or his family.

"The officials have decided he was knocked out – not winded – and have told him he's not allowed to race all day," said his mum Joanne. "So that's it, he's lost his first place in the championship and I have one devastated, frustrated and disheartened son. How unfair."

Battling with the likes of Conrad Mewse and Jordan Eccles, Hague has been in contention for top titles all the way through his youth career and this was a hard pill to swallow. Osmaston also had a slice of ill-fortune at Blaxhall as another DNS was sandwiched by a brace of second place returns but with Hague scoring zero he left Blaxhall with a 32-point championship lead.

Behind Osmaston the battle rages with Hague holding a two-point advantage over third-placed Robert Yates (Watson Plant IDS Bridgestone Yamaha). Robbie Dowson (Eurotek KTM) put in his most impressive performance at Blaxhall and by going 1-2-3 for third overall he moves into fourth just one point further back.

Sitting in fifth and also within striking distance of second place is Henry Williams.



Henry Williams holds down third on the Feehily MX KTM

## SERIES STANDINGS

- 1 Oliver Osmaston 166, 2 Jay Hague 134,
- 3 Robert Yates 132, 4 Robbie Dowson 131,
- 5 Henry Williams 129, 6 Albie Wilkie 112



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# ROUTE MASTERS!

WITH ONE ROUND LEFT TO GO WE CHECK IN ON THE ROUTE 77 GT CUP...

**W**ith just one round of the Route 77 GT Cup to go – at Pontrilas on August 22/23 – Charlie Heyman has already wrapped up the 65cc title, Callum Gasson has a healthy lead in the Biggies and Luke Smith is odds-on to win the MXY2 crown. As for the rest of the titles – they're all in the melting pot for what should be a cracking finale.

With British titles up for grabs the action has been especially competitive in both Auto sections. Throughout the series in the six to seven age group Lucca Aston, Jayden Wright, Preston Lewis, Kai Thorpe, Kayden Smith and Harry Thickett have all scored heat wins. That said, Thickett has come to the fore in later rounds and he holds sway 19 points in front of Smith.

In the seven to eight championship Riley Keene has been the irresistible force, particularly over the second part of the season. An amazing 11 wins from the last 12 races gives him a six-point advantage over four-time heat winner McKenzie Marshall.

With Heyman already celebrating success in the EHR 65s with 20 heat wins so far the battle is on for runner-up bragging rights as Raife Broadley tries to fend off Kyle Ingram. Alfie Jones had been the main chaser behind Heyman but with a World Juniors date clash for round six his challenge ended.

With MBO runner Ike Carter now trailing long

time series leader Sam Nunn by just 10 points the shoot-out in the Smallies is one not to be missed.

Along with Lewis Wood they have shared out the heat wins and there's little to choose between all three guys so it should be a thriller. Wood holds series third 70 points off top spot and looking over his shoulder he has his hands full with Louie Kessell just one point behind.

TM pilot Callum Gasson holds the whip hand in the Biggies. He's 36 points to the good but with Sam Price flat out to regain lost ground after missing round four Gasson will need to be on it all weekend. In the scrap for bronze Jake Winnard and Denny Rapson will be duking it out for one more round.

The battle for the MXY2 crown began with Henry Siddiqui dominating, Irish raider Luke Smith threatening massively and Jake Edey working his way up to a winning pace. Siddiqui crashed out heavily at round five but by that time Smith had already taken series charge and now appears a shoo-in for the title. Four more good finishes from Edey will return the runner-up prize as Kieron Cooke keeps the pressure on in third.

Stunning youth shows in the adult two-stroke 125s have always been a feature of past GT Cups and this season's hero is Michael Ellis. On the box at every round and with three overall wins, Ellis has been simply brilliant and is

just 10 points adrift of veteran TM runner Jim Davies. Ellis has been the winner over the last two rounds so this one could be epic!

## SERIES STANDINGS

### Auto 6/7

**1** Harry Thickett 983, **2** Kayden Smith 964, **3** Kai Thorpe 950, **4** Neo McCartney 867, **5** Lincoln Hasted 815 **6** Alfie Osborn 781

### Auto 7/8

**1** Riley Keene 1005, **2** McKenzie Marshall 999, **3** Louis Vincent 929, **4** Ellis Poole 879, **5** Harrison Greenough 862, **6** Finley Boxall 850

### Junior 65cc

**1** Charlie Heyman 1066, **2** Raife Broadley 862, **3** Kyle Ingram 843, **4** Bradd Timmis 815, **5** Alfie Jones 780, **6** Arai Elcock 772

### SW85

**1** Sam Nunn 996, **2** Ike Carter 986, **3** Lewis Wood 926, **4** Louie Kessell 925, **5** Bobby Bruce 849, **6** Ryan Mawhinney 824

### BW85

**1** Callum Gasson 932, **2** Sam Price 896, **3** Jake Winnard 836, **4** Denny Rapson 831, **5** Drew Anderson 808, **6** Declan Hunter 754

### MXY2

**1** Luke Smith 980, **2** Jake Edey 929, **3** Kieron Cooke 899, **4** Daniel Sheperd 771, **5** Myles Saunders 710, **6** Dan Whitehead 672





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## RETURN OF THE MAC?

We catch up with Billy MacKenzie to talk about his extraordinary race career and what it'd take to tempt him out of retirement. We also take the 2016 Husqvarna MX range out for a spin and head to Maggiora to run some laps on the new KX450F. We'll also have a look at the EWC as it stands now and what the future might hold plus there'll be a stack more stuff that we haven't thought of just yet...



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